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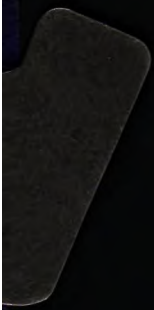
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# Parish Teachings.

SECOND SERIES.

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## THE LORD'S PRAYER,

*AND OTHER SERMONS.*

BY THE

REV. T. T. CARTER,

(LATE RECTOR OF CLEWER,)

HON. CANON OF CH. CH. OXFORD,

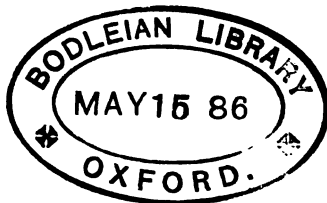
AND WARDEN OF THE HOUSE OF MERCY, CLEWER.

LONDON :

J. MASTERS AND CO., 78, NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCLXXXVI.

100. cc. 157.<sup>b</sup>



LONDON :  
J. MASTERS AND CO., PRINTERS,  
ALBION BUILDINGS, BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE, E.C.

TO THE  
REV. ROLAND ERRINGTON,  
RECTOR OF CLEWER,  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR,  
WITH THE GRATEFUL SENSE OF MUCH CONSIDERATE AND  
CONTINUED KINDNESS  
ON HIS PARTING FROM THE PARISH  
WHERE HE HAD MINISTERED UPWARDS OF THIRTY-SIX YEARS.





## *P R E F A C E.*

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THIS volume, like the former series, with the exception of the last three Sermons, is composed of Lenten courses given during different seasons, at the Parish Church, and reproduced, with as much faithfulness as was possible, from notes taken down at the time.

The three last Sermons, two of which were preached elsewhere, were originally written, and published, and are now reprinted, and added to the former Sermons, as they touch on subjects which still continue to be matter of special practical interest.

That any who may become acquainted with the contents of this volume, will sometimes remember the author in their prayers, is his earnest request, and felt to be the more needful, as advancing years speak of the nearness of the end.



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# THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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## I.

**Our Father, Which art in Heaven.**

**T**HE LORD'S Prayer has ever been regarded by the Church as one of its chiefest treasures. It came from the lips of the Incarnate GOD Himself, and for the use of His children alone. In the early Church it was never allowed to be used except by the baptized, as really applicable only to the elect, the "peculiar people" of GOD.

We say it so continually, with such frequency, that there is great and special danger of its being passed over without a thought dwelling upon it, or the heart accompanying the words of the lips. It is brief in its whole compass, and in its separate sentences, but this very brevity ought to teach us that GOD is to be approached, not with many words or much repetition, but with the inward movement

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of the hidden spirit, the deep intense longing of the soul itself.

We should never fail to remember that prayer is not a mere outward exercise, not mere words, but a stretching out of the spirit of man to the Eternal Spirit, the rising up of the soul to reach its Maker,—a seeking to unite itself with the Everlasting, and to win the graces and blessings which we need as necessary for our true life and our perfection.

When we turn to the prayer itself, every petition deserves our careful thought, if we would at all enter into the depths of meaning, with which our LORD intended it to be used.

To-day I will confine myself to the address, leaving the petitions themselves to be considered separately. "Our FATHER Which art in Heaven." Of all the wonderful utterances of this pattern prayer, there is none so remarkable as this address,—that we should be encouraged to address the Everlasting and Infinite GOD by so familiar and touching a title as that of "FATHER."

Let us first consider this word, "FATHER." In considering it, I might dwell on the doctrine involved in it,—our creation in His image and likeness; our sonship and union through His Only-begotten SON; or again, our adoption by the Spirit ever pre-

sent in our own hearts, whereby we continually cry "Abba, FATHER;"—a threefold mystery, each bringing us into the relation of children to Almighty GOD. Or again, we might view the word as setting forth the love and mercy of the Covenant of Grace, our being chosen out of the mass of mankind to be related to GOD, as in a family, as children to a parent. All these are doctrinal views, bound up in this term "FATHER;" but I would rather now speak very simply in reference to the affections which ought to be awakened in the heart when we thus address GOD, and I would select two such affections,—the affection of trustful love, and the affection of holy fear.

First, the affection of trustful love. Consider the instinctive feeling which binds together a father and a child,—for a father's heart longs to be trusted by the child, and an affectionate child is instinctively drawn to express in a parent's ear all his difficulties, all his secret feelings, with the confidence of finding a responsive love and kindness. These feelings are often thwarted, perverted, contrary to the will of Him Who made us, but they are, or ought to be, the effect of this relationship, which is to be cherished between father and child, and such as GOD intended to prevail in the human heart.

Think, then, what it is when we transfer this same



mind and this same feeling to our relation with Almighty GOD, believing that He has such feelings towards us, His children, and that we should have such towards Him. And surely Holy Scripture assures us that He has these feelings, that He desires to be trusted by us, and to know from ourselves the secrets of our hearts, and to feel us leaning upon Him, and to be thus confidently and familiarly treated by us.

Again, on our side, the side of the creature, think what a repose, what peace and assurance, there might be in the heart of a child of GOD, as he feels himself enfolded in the everlasting arms, when he pours out his desires and necessities, his trials and his doubts, and asks his Heavenly FATHER for help in them all.

But with this trustful love there should be a certain fear. Towards an earthly parent there is fear of displeasure in doing wrong. How much more must there be this feeling towards the all-holy GOD? "What must such a FATHER expect of me? What the standard by which He will measure me? How pure, and true, and faithful must a child be who goes with the feeling of near relationship to a FATHER so holy and true, so just in all His attributes and judgments." Such must needs be the feelings of a thoughtful child of GOD, and in proportion as we feel such a

fear, we are advancing and improving. But, observe, it is not a degrading, servile fear that is meant; not such a fear as makes us shrink from Him; but one that makes us cautious, reverent, devout, watchful in our lives, and careful in our acts. And this because such a holy FATHER is ever looking at us, His judgment ever being passed upon us, while He seeks to find in us an obedience to His will, and something of a likeness to Himself. The more perfect we become, the more this holy fear will be felt. In Isaiah's vision,<sup>1</sup> the Angels are represented as having their faces and feet covered by their folded wings, while waiting in the Presence of the LORD of all. This is the token of their reverent fear and awe.

Let us next consider the second part of this address, "Our FATHER, Which art in Heaven." Here again I might dwell on the doctrinal significance of the words, "in Heaven," as a settled abode, a sphere of glory, where GOD is more manifested than elsewhere, and where a great company of the Blessed is gathered about Him. I might dwell on two great mysteries which seem so irreconcilable with each other, His omnipresence, and if I may so express it, His localisation, or presence in place. But I pass on to direct

<sup>1</sup> Isa. vi. 1.

your minds rather, as before, to the affections which should be stirred up in our minds by this idea of GOD, as being "in Heaven." And here I will point out two affections which ought to arise in us at the thought—the affection of joy, and the affection of sadness.

How unspeakable is the joy and delight of knowing, that our FATHER is in Heaven, that our home therefore is *there*; our place by His family hearth, as it were, and this prepared for us; where the family gathering is to be at last with all the exquisite blessedness of loving and being loved—and this actually in Heaven. How uplifting, how thrilling, to be able to say, "I am His own child, the child of His love, the offspring of His affections, and He looks for me, prepares a place for me, by His side; I cannot rest till I am at home with Him, in that home eternal in the heavens."

But with that joy there will necessarily be sadness, for Heaven seems so far off, and the thought will come, "Shall I ever reach it? I am as one banished, I have to win my way back through many a painful effort, many a struggle, through repentance, self-denial, discipline. Shall I win my way to that far-off land, though it is indeed my own proper home?" There must needs be tears mingled with the smiles,

sadness with the hope. There will be this mingled feeling, for "we sow in tears," while yet we trust to "reap in joy."<sup>1</sup>

Once more consider the term, "*Our* FATHER." There is much in this word "our;" and here again I may dwell on two thoughts which it expresses—the thought of fellowship in love, and the thought of lowliness and humility.

First, the thought of fellowship. How remarkable it is that we are not to approach GOD alone, without thinking also of others. In this wonderful prayer we always carry others with us in our heart, we bear with us really the truth of the whole vast multitude who are interested equally with ourselves, who may approach Him in the same familiar and affectionate terms—we embrace the whole world-wide company of those who call GOD "FATHER," when we say "Our FATHER." As we pray for *our own* needs, desires, and longings, our prayers extend to take in *their* needs, their hopes, their longings; and the means and the ends for them and for us are the very same.

When our LORD teaches us to pray, He would not have us feel as solitary beings, isolated, absorbed in our own salvation—He would have us enlarge our hearts, taking in the whole body, the innumerable mul-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxvi. 5.

titude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, who stand in the same relation to Him as we ourselves.

And with this thought should be the thought of humility, because the term "our" reminds us, that in this same bond of the covenant, the same link of filial relationship, we are knit together with the lowest and poorest, and it may be the unworthiest of His people, who yet may be equally His in the end, though far off from Him now—and who have even, though disobedient, as great a right as ourselves to take up the accents of His children. He would have us despise none of His creatures. He would have us feel respect and esteem, one towards another. He would have none lift himself up in thought above his fellow. He would have us walk humbly in the consciousness of a common frailty and a common hope, and in the thought of His love extending over all, for He Himself has no "respect of persons." And this He would teach us by the prayer He gives all alike to use.

Let us then try to enter into the depths of the wonderful words of this opening address, and pray GOD, as we say the words so frequently, it may be so hurriedly, remembering what they mean,—pray that we may be heard not for our much speaking, but for our earnest feeling; that our hearts may more and more go along with our lips; that these words which

we have known and learnt from our earliest days, which we treasure above all other prayers, which we shall transmit to those who come after us as their precious heritage—that these words may not be lost to ourselves, and be a subject of our condemnation. What will the last gathering be, what the universal blessedness, when all the vast multitude of the redeemed, fully believing and fulfilling in their lives, what they have so ceaselessly expressed with their mouths, shall look on the FATHER'S Face with a boundless joy and endless thanksgiving !

## II.

### *Hallowed be Thy Name.*

**A** CERTAIN order determines the arrangement of the petitions in this prayer, which our LORD has taught us.

The three first petitions relate to GOD Himself, and the others to our necessities. If we ourselves had made this prayer, this would not have been the order of the petitions. We should have thought of our own needs first, and of what relates to GOD afterwards. The very order of the petitions thus seems a kind of proof that the prayer came from One higher than man,—One Who knew more truly the relations between the Creator and the creature. He would, no doubt, thus teach us, that there is something that ought to be dearer to us even than our daily bread, dearer even than the forgiveness of our sins,—that what is due to GOD should ever take the first place in man's estimation,—that His honour, His glory,

His praises, should be the first thought ; that the thought of our own necessities should come after.

We see how this true sense of what is due to GOD, is shown by those who are set before us as examples in Holy Scripture. Think of Noah coming forth from the ark,—his first idea is to offer sacrifice. Think of Abraham in his pilgrim life,—how he makes it his first business when he settles anywhere to build an altar. Think how Job in his state of suffering (which ordinarily makes men so selfish, so engrossed in their own trials) utters such a thought as this, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” In these men’s minds the first thought was of GOD. What the creature needed, what they themselves desired, was their secondary thought.

So it is in this great prayer, in the order of the petitions. We take to-day for our consideration the first petition, and there are two lines of thought which I would suggest to you as to this petition. First, as to its meaning, and secondly as to the affections with which we should utter it, as we pray.

First as to the meaning,—“Hallowed be Thy Name.” What is meant by His Name? It cannot mean GOD Himself, as He is in His own secret essential Being, for we cannot lessen or increase the sanctity of the Divine essence. He is so far above,



so far beyond our reach, that we cannot add anything to His holiness, He is the same unchangeable Being for ever and ever. His "Name" means rather whatever GOD has done to make Himself known, whatever has been revealed of the hidden things of GOD. In this respect He, if I may so speak, exposes Himself to His creature's treatment of Him; His honour and glory are affected by His creature's conduct. Thus, for instance, His revelation of Himself, whether taught us in the Scriptures, or by long tradition, may be abused. Consider how His Word is profaned by the infidel and the sceptic, by the irreverent and the reckless man,—how constantly by careless and light talk, and foolish jesting, men profane even what they know to be the truth.

Again, consider the Providence of GOD, through which He is perpetually working throughout His creation, His wisdom, His beneficence, His tenderness, His pity, His particular care of our individual lives; and think how this is often denied, and thought to be the result of mere chance, of the combination of atoms or external forces. Men leave GOD out of their reckoning. Men would thrust GOD back into vacancy, as it were, out of knowledge, out of their own consciousness, as if we owed Him nothing, as if He cared not for us. And yet more, think how con-

tinually even GOD'S faithful ones forget Him, as He thus reveals Himself,—how they despond, murmur, resent, rebel, if what He does is not precisely to their mind, how at any moment they rise against Him, and in their passionate impatient impulses condemn Him.

Again, consider the Church which GOD has formed, which from the beginning of ages has been in the world, and which through different stages has advanced, until at His Incarnation it became a visible Temple, dwelt in by the HOLY GHOST. I do not speak of buildings of stone, of fabrics in which men meet to worship GOD, but of the Sacraments of His grace, of the orders of His ministry, of His truths revealed in the Bible, of all the means formed to gather in souls, and to train up a people for Him, in whom He may be glorified. Think how the Church and its ordinances are maligned, resisted, even by those for whom He died ; how it is despised by the many ; how all the offers of His love are disclaimed, and they fail, because men cling rather to their sins, and to their own imaginations.

Both the natural and the supernatural worlds are of GOD, and the Name of GOD means whatever He is known by in the world, just as a creature is known by what we see or learn of him, and as we give things

their names from what we know of them. I might extend this thought. I might show how all things around us in the natural order of the world, how even the inanimate creatures, their wonderful mechanism, their delightful beauty, their winning attractions and usefulness, speak of Him Who made them,—and how, again, in the spiritual world, all the symbols and objects of reverence we gather round us in the sanctuary, holy vessels, holy garments, have a meaning, a relation to GOD, and speak of Him to those who have hearts to understand.

When then we say, “Hallowed be Thy Name,” we mean that all these modes and signs of His Presence and of His designs should be honoured by us throughout the whole visible world, both the world of nature and the world of grace.

The Son of Man is ever speaking for and to men. He desires that all those who know not GOD (as the heathen) might be brought to the knowledge of Him, to honour and revere Him in what He has done, that He might reveal Himself to them. He desires that those who know Him but little (as children) should be made reverent, should be instructed about Him, should be prevented from profaning anything that is of Him, should be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD: that those who do know

Him and have understanding, should ever remember His presence, should ever bear Him reverently in their heart, should think of all within their reach that speaks of Him, should honour Him above all things : —that ourselves who offer His prayer should be more devout, more reverent, and discern Him more in all His doings, and treasure above all things the wondrous truth, that the Unseen, the All-Holy, the All-Beautiful, has in such manifold ways made Himself known to such as we are. Thus far then as to the meaning of the petition.

Further, I would speak of the affections and dispositions of heart, with which we should use this petition.

First, it should be with exceeding gratitude. For what could make us thankful, if not that the everlasting GOD does thus make Himself known to us ; that He is revealing Himself to us in earth and sky, in all that speaks of His handy-work ; that His love for us is shown in the midst of us in the commonest things with which we have to do. If we have eyes to see, and hearts to feel, we can discern in all around us the movement of His hands, the thought of His mind, the love of His heart. And to think that He has put Himself into such a position that He can be scorned, hated, reviled, denied ; that just as JESUS in

His Incarnation placed Himself in a position in which men could do with Him what they would, in like manner GOD has so revealed Himself in His creation, that we can honour or dishonour Him, hallow or profane Him, vent our own evil thoughts upon Him, or add to His glory by rightful thoughts and reverent regard for Him. He does all this out of His love, simply that we may be happy, blessed, making us ready to be with Him in His infinite glory. Surely this is a cause for great thankfulness.

Next, we should have a sense of deep humility, for how can we take upon our lips the words, "Hallowed be Thy Name," without remembering how constantly we have profaned His Name? Think of our ignorant childhood, our careless youth, our wilful manhood, how we have misused His gifts, despised His heavenly grace, thinking of Him less than of the least of the outward things which He has given us, and thinking more of our own glory than of His, as if there was a common purpose to raise up our own glory and that of our fellows, and put Him aside,—how even the best of us are too careless, too thoughtless, too selfish in things regarding our GOD, in comparison with the things that regard ourselves.

And again, we should use the words with deep desires, with an earnest longing that any such profana-

tion or such neglect should be no more, but that we should grow in reverence and love, in devotion and thoughtfulness, in earnest care for every particular that affects GOD, and, even more still, in courage to speak for GOD when others speak against Him, when we hear Him, or what belongs to Him, treated in light joke, or irreverent remark; that we should bear witness, if need be, in the face of the multitude, in the face even it might be of our dearest friend, before the greatest and noblest of the land, if we were called upon thus to act for the honour of Him Whose dishonour we cannot bear. To grow in these ways should be our object more and more, if there is any reality in our use of this great prayer.

Lastly, take yet another view of the subject. There is a time, when forgetting our own unworthiness, and putting aside the thought of our own sins and infirmities, we can ascribe honour, praise, and adoration to our GOD, just as if we were really worthy to approach the All-Holy. This is in our Communion Service, and it is in this alone that we join the worship of Heaven, as if we were already in Heaven, already perfected; when we cry "Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD GOD of Hosts; Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory." We then for awhile forget, as it were, what we are, and unite ourselves "with angels and arch-

angels, and the whole company of Heaven ;” and it is by associating ourselves with them, and with all the Communion of Saints, that we can use these words, as by faith looking forward to the glory that we hope to enter into hereafter, when in very truth we shall be for ever associated with the Blessed before the throne of GOD ; when all those who shall be redeemed from the earth shall be gathered in at last in the circle of the Blessed, and shall join in that song as it ever rises before the throne.

This petition will then have ceased, because in the purity of that higher world, in the fulness of the glory of GOD filling all creatures, there is no possibility of dishonouring Him any more, no possibility of abusing any one of His gifts, no sense of need, no misusing any of His heavenly graces ; we shall then say no longer “ Hallowed be Thy Name,” for it *is* hallowed,—and we shall then join the holy ones who ever “ praise the Holiest in the height.” And we surely anticipate this state, when round the altar, purified by penitence, we approach to receive Him, are one with Him, and are in spirit taken up, as it were, into the highest realms with all the blessed creatures in their perfect union with Him.

Then shall we ourselves, being hallowed, speak to the All-Holy as one with that holiness which we have

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afar off loved to honour here ;—hallowed by the supernatural graces which He has given to us. With joy we shall taste at last the fulness of His glory within the blessed circle of those who are praising and adoring His Majesty for ever and ever.



### III.

#### *Thy Kingdom come.*

**L**ET us to-day dwell on the second petition in our LORD'S Prayer. It resembles the first petition in one respect,—it still relates to what concerns GOD. As in the first petition we pray that GOD may be revered everywhere, throughout the world, so in this second we pray that He may reign everywhere, His righteous government prevailing over all hearts, and overruling the varied forms of sin and unbelief.

It is a blessing to feel that there are everywhere those, if only comparatively a small number, who are daily throughout the world upon their knees offering up this desire ; it must be some reparation, if we may use the expression, some amends to GOD, for all the dishonour cast upon His Name, that there are those who in their hearts look forward to His coming, and long for it, whose aspirations rise up in

accordance with His own desire, and, recognising His righteous claim over His creatures, pray that His authority may at last be established on earth, as in Heaven. There is here a warning against selfishness, for the words we use are not limited to ourselves; the words which pass our lips embrace not only every one dear to us, every one connected with us, but far beyond that circle, all also who wear the form of man, even to endless generations, the whole vast compass of humanity. The petition is that His kingdom may "come" to all.

What is intended in these words? They do not mean the reign of GOD in nature, though we speak of His kingdom of nature, and we know that "not a sparrow falls to the ground" without His will—no event can happen, no passing change of the least kind can take place, but that His will has ordered it, or what is called His secondary will has permitted it. Nor is there anything so contrary to His will, but that He may overrule it. But this general reign of GOD in the universe is not here meant. Nor again do the words mean merely that His Church should extend everywhere. There is an outward kingdom that has been established by His almighty grace, a hierarchy with their appointed ministries, spreading already among all nations of the world: and this, no

doubt, is embraced by the term. His visible Church is a kingdom. But the words mean more than this, for we know that the Church embraces both the evil and the good. It is a net into which were to be gathered fish of every kind. These outward ordinances, these visible means of grace and appointed ministries, ought indeed to be coextensive with the reign of CHRIST in the hearts of men, but we know that they are not. We have then to look for something deeper than the extension of the outward organisation of the Church, as the fulfilment of this petition.

The "leaven hid in three measures of meal," or "the treasure hid in the field," or what our LORD describes as "the kingdom of Heaven taken by violence," alluding to the difficulty with which it finds entrance into the heart,—these words of our LORD teach us that there is an invisible kingdom, as well as the Church which is His visible kingdom. Wherever there is any one within this invisible kingdom who in his mind fully acknowledges the truth of CHRIST, who in his heart loves deeply that truth, who in his will yields himself up to do what that truth demands, who strives to bring his temper and conversation into conformity with the mind of CHRIST, who is loyal to his LORD so as to witness for Him when rejected, to

testify against all the powers of the world which oppose Him, and not to confess Him only, but to suffer for Him if need be,—such persons wherever they may be found are true subjects of His reign, true citizens of His kingdom. Wherever you find such persons there the kingdom of CHRIST has really and truly come. Among them you see in actual power that enthroned presence to which is promised righteousness, and peace, and joy, which are the true signs of His heavenly kingdom. The light cannot enter the blind eye, nor the sweetest music touch the deaf ear, so neither can the sweet strong sway of grace, which is the triumph of the kingdom, enter the unwilling mind, or penetrate the alienated heart.

There have been some who looked for the coming of CHRIST in outward glory. The Jews in our LORD'S time had this expectation; and there was such an idea in the middle ages, when some men thought they ought to force men into the kingdom of GOD by strength of arms, and external authority. But our LORD condemned this belief when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and again, "the kingdom of GOD cometh not with observation;" and again, "the kingdom of GOD is within you."

I would note one great difference between earthly kingdoms and the kingdom of grace. They are so

far alike that each has its laws, each its customs, its traditions, its forms, and each its appointed means of carrying out its laws and customs. But earthly kingdoms govern by the sword, and will be obeyed whether the heart is won or not ; the kingdom of GOD on the other hand influences and prevails only where it finds the willing mind, and the obedient heart.

And the lesson is this. GOD has given to man, as one of His greatest gifts, freedom of the will. Man can act or not act,—he can speak, or do, or be, this or that, according to his own choice, at least to a certain extent. This freedom is the mysterious prerogative of our nature, which in a faint shadowy way resembles the power of Almighty GOD Himself. His will is His law. All things are only as He wills, and He has given this same awful power to us, His creatures, in a real measure. He will not disturb or take away that gift, even for the sake of man's own present peace. He will reverence His own gift in man,—He “waits to be gracious” with long-suffering patience, for every sinner giving time for repentance. But He will not destroy in us that principle which enables man to love with a free love, to serve with a voluntary obedience, and which alone makes our service acceptable, which alone can be suitable to a creature made in the image of GOD. The Spirit strives within hearts by drawing,

attracting, alluring them in every possible way,—but not by constraining, or forcing, or overruling. Man is thus far free, he may give himself to his GOD if he will, through the grace which is at work within him ; or he may resist Him, remain alienated, antagonistic, raise himself up on a separate throne, as the acknowledged defiant enemy of GOD. GOD permits even this to be, rather than take away His noblest gift, and with it the power of offering a free and acceptable sacrifice.

When then there are found human hearts, rightly influenced by such high principles of life, and in proportion as they are thus influenced for good, *there* His kingdom has come, and there is found a place where our LORD can reign, and of these obedient hearts the Spirit beareth witness, when He says, “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a lowly and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones.”<sup>1</sup>

And is this all that is meant to be fulfilled ? Surely no—we have been speaking of the hidden life, the secret treasure, unknown to the world. But the kingdom of grace will pass into the kingdom of glory,—the perfected secret work of the Spirit will at last

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah lvii. 15.

be manifest, will be revealed at last in all its beauty and its greatness, and both the soul and the body of the elect will be transfigured into the glorious beauty in which CHRIST ever abides in oneness with the FATHER.

There are then two expectations in the minds of the faithful, as they use this petition, and dwell upon it in its fulness. Firstly, as regards this earth. We have all heard of the Millennium. There have been learned and good men who have believed, that CHRIST shall reign on earth for a thousand years, that after that time Satan shall be again unchained, and then that the final struggle, and the victory shall take place. The Catholic Church has never accepted this idea as the true interpretation of the Revelation of S. John, but it may be regarded as a belief not contrary to the mind of the Church to suppose, that, in some way unknown to us, where CHRIST was dishonoured, there He shall be magnified,—that where He was subjected to such awful shame, and agony, in the face of His creatures, on Mount Calvary, there He shall be honoured and adored,—that there may be some reparation for that extremity of shame and woe ; that in some form or other, CHRIST, surrounded by His Saints, and heralded by His angels, shall be recognised, and seen as the King of Glory, and

LORD of all creation,—this, it may possibly be, on the very spot of earth where He bore His great dishonour.

“Thy kingdom come,”—whenever we say this prayer we honour Him hiddenly; we cry aloud with the desire, that at last we may see Him with the outward eye, on this earth, coming back to be glorified for evermore, and so that there may be a “new earth,” even as there is a “new Heaven.”

But there is yet this second, further expectation, which looks beyond this earth, upward, into the higher Heaven, when the kingdom of grace shall have passed into the full development of the kingdom of glory, when the FATHER'S Name shall be “written on the foreheads” of all the elect, when these bodies of our humiliation shall be changed into the likeness of CHRIST, even in their outward form, when all tears shall be wiped from all faces, when there will be no possibility of the faintest shadow of sin clouding any faithful soul, when each and all shall reflect the full beauty of GOD, and be made one with GOD, and sing the glorious song of Moses and the Lamb, and sit on their thrones as CHRIST on His throne, each in his separate glory individually, yet all together exhibiting the combined wonder of the Communion of Saints, gathered about their enthroned LORD, when



He shall at last rejoice in the full "satisfaction of His Soul," according to the desire to save and bless, which consumed Him during His earthly travail, as He poured out His Soul in His sacrifice even unto death.

#### IV.

**Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.**

**I**T is often observed that what is most familiar has least effect upon us. And this is so, even where we should expect most care and watchfulness. It is said that in our great coal pits, where fire-damp is everywhere liable to break out, and there is the constant danger of instant death, the men grow so accustomed to the thought, that they gradually cease to think at all of the risk in which they are always living. In the same manner with regard to the thoughts that pass through our minds, and the words we utter with our lips, the most solemn expressions may become so familiar that we utter them, not at all heeding what we say. This is the case with this great prayer, and perhaps more so than with other prayers, because it is so frequently and constantly on our lips.

I scarcely know among the pious exercises that

may be recommended for Lent, any one more simple and useful than this,—once every day to say the LORD'S Prayer very thoughtfully, pausing after each petition, and asking ourselves how we have kept it, or tried to keep it, and what it means that we should be or do. If this were done earnestly with prayer for light, and continued for any length of time, I cannot but think that it would lead to the deeper work of grace in many a soul.

Among the petitions in the LORD'S Prayer, there is none to which this remark more truly applies, none more mysterious or full of teaching, than the one we now have to consider, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven."

I might dwell on the mysteries embraced by the wonderful mystery of the will of the Supreme Being, so active, so all-comprehending, ordering and ruling all the universe, all events of the future, equally as the present and the past. I might dwell on the mystery of creatures having been formed with wills of their own, each separate individual having a separate will, and the will in man making each man a fresh centre, and his will an internal force acting on all around him. Or I might dwell on the great truth, how the creature's will, although thus free, is yet overruled, so that the wills of all the faithful are

brought into union with the will of GOD, and how even the wicked must at last be made submissive to the destiny appointed for them. Or I might dwell on the state of the blessed, when each separate person will be perfectly conformed to the will of GOD, and their union with Him in every thought and impulse and desire will be one with His own, and thus become holy as He is holy, and blessed as He is blessed.

But I would rather dwell on the practical aspect of this petition,—on the life of obedience on earth to which we are called, and I would consider how this applies to different persons, and see what are the hindrances which we find in living such a life, that as far as each one of us is concerned, GOD'S "will may be done on earth, as it is in Heaven."

Is there any one here present who uses this prayer, and yet willingly continues in any known sin? Such a man does not need a judge to condemn him. He is condemned of himself. If at any moment it might please GOD to take him to Himself, he would be "speechless,"—and the awful sentence will be heard within his own soul, as the Voice speaks, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xix. 22.

Again, is there any one who is neglecting, or omitting, day by day, to do anything that he knows, according to the commandment of GOD, ought to be done,—putting it off, procrastinating day by day, and yet day by day offering this prayer, making this petition? Surely his life falsifies his words; such a one must feel that living in such neglect, such continual omission, he is speaking before GOD what he does not mean.

Again, is any one called to suffer, and in the suffering complains and murmurs, and yet knows, as a real belief, that GOD'S providence overrules all, and has directly sent, or has certainly permitted, that very trial, by a particular act of His will, how can he truly utter that petition? He is, as he speaks, expressing in words, that it is GOD'S will that causes him the trial, and yet rebelling at what He has been pleased to appoint.

These are samples of the ways in which this petition applies.

Let me point out moreover some of the chief hindrances which keep us back from doing the will of GOD. They are chiefly three.

First, Ignorance. I mean wilful ignorance. We are not responsible for ignorance which is not our own fault, but for wilful ignorance we are responsible.

If we do not care to know what the will of GOD is; if we have not taken heed when it is taught us; if we do not like reproof, and resent it; if we always prefer other studies to the Word of GOD, other reading more amusing and attractive; if we like to be well informed and intelligent on other subjects more than as to the will of our Heavenly FATHER,—and so life passes, and we are ignorant, because we are willing to be ignorant, or at least take no pains to know of the principal laws and commandments which GOD has decreed for the ordering and governance of our lives,—then we are surely guilty before Him, and are continually sinning in His sight.

Secondly, Self-will is a hindrance. We have desires, passions, wishes, manifold, and by the constitution of our nature, every wish and desire acts upon the will,—inclines the will to seek the object of desire. And we have a feeling of independence which leads us to follow what we wish, and we may thus delight in every fashion of the moment, even the most frivolous fancy, and love it the more because it is our own way. The very fact that it is our own choice, our will, leads some the more to do it in the face of the most solemn warnings, in the face of the eternal will of GOD, and all the fearful judgments, and consequences that resistance to it involves.

Thirdly, Sloth is a hindrance ; sluggishness in doing what we know and see to be the will of GOD. I do not mean weakness. We are feeble, and the will of GOD is strong ; we are self-indulgent, and the will of GOD is high and holy, sometimes even awful in its demands. If it were merely weakness that hindered us, we might trust GOD and do what we could. He would help, strengthen, pardon, take pity, forgive the failing, bear with the infirmity, if He saw that we were earnestly trying, and seeking grace to strengthen our weakness ; He would renew us continually with His Spirit in the inner man, watch over us, and lead us onward in the endeavour to rise to live to His will. I do not mean that. I mean by sloth, the want of effort, which arises from the mere love of ease and self-indulgence, the shrinking back from what would cost us such an effort, a sacrifice from which nature recoils, though we know GOD would enable us to fulfil what we attempt for His sake. How many a soul is lost through this clinging to some allowed habit of sin ; the love of ease, or pleasure, or self-indulgence, ruining the soul's health ; shrinking from self-denial, though the "soldier" of CHRIST is bound "to endure hardness." How few fast or watch as well as pray, or deny themselves any single comfort, even when the Church of GOD

is continually calling them to self-denial and penitence, and the Holy Scriptures speak of the necessity of taking up the cross, and thus following CHRIST.

Further, let me add two of the motives, the most touching and effective, which may influence our hearts, and aid us to enter into the spirit of this prayer. The first I would mention is this. The very words we are speaking of are the words which JESUS used on the night of His Agony ; His sacred lips at that awful moment uttered those very words which so frequently, alas ! often so heedlessly pass our lips. And what was He doing when He uttered them ? He was strengthening Himself to endure the Cross ; strengthening His purpose to save us, putting away from Himself the temptation which then assailed Him to save man without the Cross,—or to leave man in his misery that Himself might be spared the Cross. Terror came upon Him for a moment,—“FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.” That was the prompting of man’s sensibility, when some terrible prospect assaults him,—the natural shrinking from suffering, the effort to escape the bitter scorn, the pain, the shame, of the dreadful Cross. This pressed in that hour on the Soul of the Son of Man. But notwithstanding, as He uttered the words,



"Thy will, not Mine, be done," His whole Soul sprang up, casting the temptation away ; He rose, He nerved Himself for the struggle, and the utterance of that prayer was the saving of the world. Those few words spoken on the night of the Agony sealed the redemption of humanity, and leaves behind an example for all who would follow their LORD.

If you would bear in mind what we owe to that prayer as it was breathed from the lips of JESUS ; what it meant when He spoke it, would you not be drawn, attracted by our Blessed SAVIOUR'S love, and remembering what you owe to His faithful use of it, strive to catch something of the same mind so as to use it more faithfully henceforth ? And, remember, it is not in great matters only we are to follow His will, but in little trials and efforts, often more difficult to bear than greater things, because they are more constant, and seem of less importance, but which yet make up the web of life,—let the thought of that prayer of His at each moment, and the certainty that He will help us, make us strive to do the better thing, and choose the higher course. Rise and make the effort. He will strengthen you, even as He was strengthened.

Secondly. There is this other motive,—The one thing in us which GOD has left to us, to give to

Him, or not to give, is our will. All else is His own already. He claims it by a righteous claim. Health, time, talents, bodily powers, and mental gifts, we are bound to give all to Him Who gave them, but the will, He has willed, as we have seen, to be free. He wished for a free-man's service, not a bond-slave's. He did not will the creation of machines, of beings who were to be ordered by necessary laws, as He willed them to act. He left man to exercise a choice of his own, as the ground of his dignity, whether he would choose GOD rather than all else. And so man's will, and his will only, is the one thing which he has really to give, as the proof of his love.

Do you love GOD? Do you wish to love Him above others? Is the love of the creature given to the Creator? of the redeemed to the Redeemer? of the sanctified to the Sanctifier? Where is the proof? It is not in the saying that you love Him, or the mere feeling, or the mere warmth of the heart. The only real solid proof of love is to do what He wills, to offer up our own will to be conformed to His, to choose His will before our own. And thus the Perfect Type of our nature, the Second Adam, the Representative of our humanity, speaks in the 40th Psalm, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O LORD, I am content to do it, yea, Thy law is within My heart."

The surrendering the will was in itself the surrendering of His life.

May He grant us grace then to follow Him faithfully in this, in seeking to bring every thought into obedience ; to view all things more truly in the light of faith, feeling that GOD is guiding them, knowing that His wisdom and love are ordering them for the best, certain that His will is that we should live to Him in the very circumstances in which our lot is cast, that only as we do so, we are "working out our salvation." To those who thus live, though the way may at times be dark and mysterious, and the spirit may sink within, because the flesh is weak, yet He Who is the Truth has assured us that He will guide us in paths we know not of, that He will strengthen us according to our need, that He will cause His "yoke" to become "easy," and His "burden" to be "light."

## V.

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**I** HAVE spoken of the three first petitions in which, as creatures, we approach GOD, and express our longings for His glory. In the three next petitions, we address GOD, as creatures humbly acknowledging our state of need, and asking His help. To-day we take the first of these petitions which concern our necessities. It relates to our lowest necessity, our dependence on GOD for our daily food. The petition implies, that we should always bear in mind the truth that unless He feeds us day by day, we perish. We are dependent on His goodness both for our daily support, as well as our bodily health. In praying for our daily bread, we mean such a blessing on our occupations as may enable us to procure our daily food, as well as such health of body as may enable us to partake of it.

Nothing can bring to our minds so strongly the

sense of our dependence on our GOD, as the fact, that if we are deprived of our daily food we quickly feel the craving and fainting of hunger. And if disease possess the body it may be soon followed by death. In putting this petition then into our lips, GOD would remind us that this need of looking to Him in our necessities should never be off our minds.

And there is a more touching thought,—one which awakens many deep reflections,—it is this—that GOD Himself taking our nature, shared with us the necessity of daily food ; that He Himself, the Invisible GOD, the Source of Eternal Life, should willingly assume a mortal body, and subject Himself in that body to be fed at His Mother's breast—that He sat with her at her table, and partook of the same nourishment ; that afterwards He hungered for lack of food ;—that He sat at the well, of which He would drink water, while His disciples went into the city to buy food,—that He should know by His own experience what we feel of the cravings and needs of the body, and looked to the same means to satisfy that hunger. Surely these thoughts give a special sacredness to those wants which our daily instincts own ; surely with such remembrances we should learn to sanctify even our bodily organs, and enter into the deep meaning of Scripture, that “ whether we eat or

drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all for the glory of GOD."

I need not say, that grace before meals, and thanksgiving after meals, are what no faithful man should ever omit, but what I would observe goes deeper than this ; that in the feelings with which we seek and receive our daily nourishment, and exercise the calling through which we live, we should ever remember, that through the Incarnation of GOD He made Himself like unto us, even in these commonest needs of our nature.

But this petition embraces more than this daily care for our natural necessities, though before I pass from this simpler view of it, I would remind you that the petition sets before our minds the dignity of labour, which yet in the fall of man has been laid upon us as our continual burden. The petition means by "our daily bread," not the chance bread of idle beggary—but the bread that is ensured to steady work according to the great law, that "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat ;" that he should earn "his bread in the sweat of his face." It implies a conformity with the will of GOD, which our LORD Himself shared, and in sharing sanctified, when He, as a youth, took part with His Foster-father in a carpenter's labour.

But I pass on to the deeper subjects which are contained in this petition. You will at once feel that there is a deeper life than our bodily life to be sustained, and a higher nourishment necessary. And this must have been present to the mind of our LORD, when He taught us this petition, for He Himself interprets His own words, when He says, "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD."<sup>1</sup> You will no doubt remember how solemnly<sup>1</sup> He warned the multitude when they hung upon Him, as they saw the miracle of the loaves and fishes ; "labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."<sup>2</sup> This higher meaning is manifestly implied in the petition.

There is this further to be remarked, that this very same law prevails as to the appointed means of nourishing the higher life which also applies to the appointed means of nourishing the lower life. There are two instincts which equally mark the healthy condition both of the body and of the soul. The first is hunger. The desire for food is the natural instinct which shows our natural need of support. It is the same with regard to the soul. The very first sign of better things working in us ; of the HOLY SPIRIT'S

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. iv. 4.

<sup>2</sup> S. John vi. 27.

saving work in us,—is the desire for spiritual nourishment, the feeling that we need help and support for our higher life, that our soul cannot be satisfied without its proper food. The longing to know GOD, to know His truth, to learn His ways, to taste the righteousness of the life that we ought to lead, that we may be faithful to Him—the “hunger and thirst after righteousness”<sup>1</sup> of which our LORD Himself speaks, as one of the Beatitudes;—this is the natural, and necessary beginning of a transformed and renewed life. This craving that cannot rest till it has gained some knowledge of the will and love of GOD which is to our souls the only real life,—this is the first evidence of the soul’s conversion to GOD,—of the higher life growing within us.

The second sign is the use made of the desired nourishment. The digestion of our bodily food, its assimilation by the bodily organs—the taking it into the bodily system, so that it form the blood, the muscle, the nerves, the flesh of the body,—this is the true effect and value of the food we take. And it is the same when the like result follows in the soul from the nourishment it receives;—when Divine Truth is digested, becomes assimilated with the substance of the soul, and the soul’s various faculties; when the reason,

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. v. 6.



the imagination, the affections, the feelings are leavened and influenced by it, and the fruits of the Spirit become matured, and grow into perfectness. It is a true sign of advancing life, and proves its faithfulness, when one can say, This better food is indeed the object of a deeper desire than the food of my body; "The law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver ;"<sup>1</sup> or with Job, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."<sup>2</sup> Do not suppose that when our LORD said, "My meat is to do the will of My FATHER that sent Me," He was saying what could not be felt by any one of His disciples. He felt it no doubt in a supreme degree, such as could not be felt by any other but Himself. The perfect Man, one with the perfect GOD, must have felt in the union of His human soul with His FATHER'S will, such an entire satisfaction, such fulness of rest, as must be beyond what any other child of man can know of himself. But according to our measure, the same consciousness may be given to us. To every one who is faithful, in some degree, there is given a satisfaction, and a peacefulness of rest, and sweetness of joy, in possessing the knowledge of the living GOD, in knowing His will, in understanding His word, and more and more as one

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxix. 72.<sup>2</sup> Job xxiii. 12.

learns to live in it, and follow it,—a rest deeper and greater, a satisfaction of heart more sublime and more perfect than any that can be felt by the satisfaction of the desires of the bodily frame.

But even this is not all that is contained in the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." I have spoken of the means of sustaining bodily life, and the nourishing of spiritual life, but the life itself is above the means of life, and the soul, if true to its higher nature, craves for Him Who made it far more than aught else. Life craves for more life—the creature for its GOD. The true creature feels that only He Who made it can satisfy and fill its longings. Is not the word of the Psalmist a true example of a loving, earnest soul, when he says, "My soul is athirst for GOD, yea, even for the living GOD, when shall I come to appear before the presence of GOD?"<sup>1</sup> He rises above the means of life, above everything on earth to the very Source of life itself. He desires not merely GOD'S truth and love, but the very GOD Himself. When JESUS said, "I am the bread of life," He meant that not anything that He could give was enough, but Himself, His personal presence, was to be the satisfaction of the longing of His creature's soul.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xlii. 2.

We thus arrive at the highest meaning of the "bread" we ask Him to give us : we find this nourishment, this highest food, in partaking of the Blessed Sacrament of His own most precious Body and Blood. And it is a wonderful mystery that He has taken the elements of bread and wine as the outward form and sign of His presence, and associated Himself thus for ever with the common food of which every poor man partakes. In this He magnified the lowest creatures ; He thus imparts Himself in sacramental mystery. He would thus bind together the Creator and the creature, thus take us to Himself, make us one with Himself. He has made our daily bread the channel and means through which we receive the Divine Life. We consist both of matter and spirit, of soul and body, and in this sacred prayer, the gift of the everlasting GOD, we ask for the food of both, the food necessary for this perishing body, but equally the Heavenly Food of an eternal subsistence, of a life united to GOD.

## VI.

*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*<sup>1</sup>

**T**HIS petition is brought fitly before our minds this day, when the services of the Church set before us our LORD JESUS CHRIST going up to Jerusalem to suffer for the sins of the world. He gave Himself to be crucified in order that the debt incurred by the world through its sinfulness, might be discharged, Himself bearing the penalty, and we, the sinful race, being set free.

First, let me point out the difference between this petition and all the other petitions of this prayer. The other petitions are for a single object ; that is to say, they are for a single gift, but the petition we are now considering is twofold, it embraces two objects ; we ask for grace to be forgiven, and we ask for grace to forgive. The first is a prayer breathed by the spirit of repentance, and the second is the desire for charity,

<sup>1</sup> The form of this petition in S. Matt. vi. 12.

the seeking to do to others as we would be dealt with by GOD.

The connection between the two, which is of the utmost importance, I shall have to speak of at the close of my address, but first let me dwell on the meaning of the first petition ; "forgive us our debts." And observe first as to this, that it is put into our lips as a daily prayer, implying, therefore, that we daily need it, and bringing before our minds the sad truth, that we sin daily, it may not be wilful sin, it may not even be conscious sin. But when we examine ourselves at night, do we not find that there is always something wrong ? something sinful, if not in deed, yet in word, if not in word, yet in thought ; or to say the least, some forgetfulness, or hastiness, or sudden faulty impulse ; or again, if it be not an actual commission, yet an omission ? "The just man falleth seven times a day ;" was the confession of one who lived under the older covenant.

It must be well borne in mind that this prayer is specially intended, not for the wicked and ungodly, but for the children of GOD, for those who can address GOD as their FATHER, and whose minds are set on the desire that His Name may be hallowed, His kingdom come, His will be done. It is the prayer of children, though of faulty children, of children en-

deavouring to be true to their profession. GOD has taught us another prayer, for one who has forfeited the child's privilege, "I am not worthy to be called Thy son ; make me as one of Thy hired servants." That expresses the attitude proper to one who has been alienated from GOD, who has lost the privilege of the child of GOD, and seeks to return to Him in humble contrition, in humiliation, asking to be restored to the filial relationship which he had forfeited by his grievous sin. But this petition is for those who though conscious of continual faults and failings, are yet living in the earnest desire to begin afresh with more earnest devotion to a loving FATHER.

Observe again, the term by which our sins are described in the text—a term equivalent to "trespasses"—the term "debts."<sup>1</sup> That it means "*sins*" we know by the parallel passage in another evangelist,<sup>2</sup> and by the words which immediately follow the text, and which we use in our version of the LORD'S Prayer ; "for if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly FATHER will also forgive you,"—therefore "debts" and "trespasses" mean the same thing. But our LORD selects the word "debts," we cannot doubt,

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. vi. 12, compare with ver. 15.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke xi. 4, "Forgive us our sins ; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us."

with a special purpose, intending to bring out one aspect of our sins, one particular view in which we should regard them, and it is a deeply important aspect. We owe to GOD all that we are, and all we have, for we are His both by creation and redemption. We owe Him our best powers, our highest faculties, the service of our hearts, of our hands, of our heads, as beings whom He has created for His glory. We owe Him all, for He is LORD of all, and has given us all things to use for His sake, and in simple submission to His blessed will, perpetually loving Him, and finding our joy as His creatures in His service. Therefore when we withdraw from GOD any portion of what He thus claims from us, we incur a debt,—a debt that we can never pay. “Forasmuch as he had nothing to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold.”<sup>1</sup> A debt in some way must be wiped out. Some one must pay it. Some one must pay for the loss to GOD’S honour, the insult to His majesty. Sin, then, is not merely a stain upon our own nature, and a debasement of the life which GOD has given us, not merely a transgression of the law of holiness that should reign in earth as in Heaven, but a debt which demands a payment, which must be paid if the debtor may be set free. And

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xviii. 25.

therefore it is that the Redeemer of man, the Representative of the fallen race, hangs on the Cross of shame, offering the sacrifice which alone can be a satisfaction and a recompense, and thus set us free from the burden,—the Sinless One offering Himself for the sinner.

Again, notice the expression "*our* sins." You will remember that on Sunday last, in speaking of our daily bread, I observed the force of the word "*our*" as meaning our own bread in a true sense, because we have made it our own by honest labour. The word has a like force with regard to sins. They too are our *own*. There was nothing that compelled us to do them. We are free men. We cannot sin unless we consent. A mere machine could not sin. The very essence of sin is the consenting of the will. The meaning of the term, "*our*," as applied to sins, is that oneself has done them, having had the power not to do them. We cannot with any truth lay the blame on others, as Adam sought vainly to lay the blame on Eve, and as Eve would lay the blame on the serpent. GOD confounded their excuses. We too must look within ourselves to the consentient act of our own will ; we are the doers of our own deeds, the utterers of our own words, the thinkers of our own thoughts. "I acknowledge my transgressions and my



sin is ever before me," says the penitent David. Mark the *I*. David repeats the personal pronoun four times, *my* transgressions, *my* sins, before *me*, showing how he had brought home to his own conscience the fact that all his guilt was his, the burden of the penalty due to him alone.

And thus is brought out the truth, that it is to GOD and to GOD alone that we look for forgiveness. True that the Absolution which the Church commissions her Priests to give, conveys the gift of forgiveness of sins to the truly penitent, for GOD blesses the means which He has Himself ordained. As we receive our daily bread through the labour of others, so by the hands of others we may receive this wondrous gift of grace. But we must not rest our thoughts in the mere instrumentality, the Priest's ministration of this gift of peace. We look above it, through it, beyond it, to the one Offering for sin, and the one Pardoner of sin. We believe in the precious blood, we see the FATHER'S arms outstretched to receive His penitent child ; He is the only one who can, or does, forgive the sins of His children. The Priest is but the outward instrument of His mercy, acting in His Name.

Again, if we hope to be forgiven we must also forgive others who may have offended us, but for this

we need the grace of GOD. He must give us the heart. Of ourselves we cannot do it. We may see the importance, the need of the act, but it is only the grace of His HOLY SPIRIT that can breathe in our hearts this true charity. The prayer would falter on the lips of the man who does not fully in his heart forgive others. There may not necessarily be an outward reconciliation, for this must depend on others welcoming the offer, but an inward reconciliation. There must be the full forgiveness of the heart, and this is of GOD working the work of charity in His servant. If then in offering this prayer, day by day, as you come to the words, "as we forgive them that trespass against us," and there rises the thought, "such an one I have not fully forgiven," resolve as you ask for forgiveness for yourself, to put away the very least remains of the resentful mind.

But here may come a question,—How can the creature forgive "as" GOD forgives? Can man be as GOD? Can we be as One Who has said, that He will "cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,"<sup>1</sup> and "behind His back?"<sup>2</sup> It must be remembered that "as" means, not in the same degree, but after the same manner. And after what principle does GOD forgive? He forgives freely, asking for no-

<sup>1</sup> Micah vii. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 17.

thing in return. He forgives in the spirit of pure love. This is the principle of a true forgiveness, and it is thus we are to be "as" GOD. We also are to forgive freely, to desire to be at peace with all those with whom we have been at variance, demanding nothing but a return of love, a return of kindness, or, if that be impossible, at least to have for all a kindly thought, a Christian regard on our own part. Our forgiveness should be as full, as free, and as entire, as we desire forgiveness to be to us on GOD's part. Thus only do we live in the way of peace, forgiving and forgiven, thus only can we rightly rest day by day, seeking pardon for our own faults, considering what we owe to that pure love of GOD, while we ever look to it as the pattern for ourselves to follow towards our brethren.

Thus filled with charity as we kneel before Him, and feeling how we owe all we hope for to Him Who bore all the bitterness of death, that purchased for us our redemption, we shall receive the full blessing of the elect, the redeemed, and all our intercourse with others will be fraught with mercy, because we have received mercy. So at the last great day, purified in the precious blood of CHRIST, we shall be gathered into the complete fellowship of the Communion of the saints, blessed in CHRIST for ever.

## VII.

**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.<sup>1</sup>**

**T**HESE two last petitions are so closely connected that we may view them together in their mutual relation, and there could not be a fitter occasion than when we are gazing on the face of Him Who gave us this prayer, in His agony of Death ; nor among the thoughts we bear away from contemplating this mystery, is there any one more suitable as the fruit of that great sacrifice and perfect atonement.

In considering the words, I might lead you to dwell on the power of Temptation, or show you how we are liable after having once fallen, to fall again, or how great is the susceptibility of nature to respond to the inducements to evil which are continually acting on us.

But I would rather regard the subject in a practical

<sup>1</sup> Preached on Good Friday.

light, simply in reference to our common experience in our daily life. Temptation means whatever leads us to do wrong, and it may arise from within or without, from the acting and reacting of influences from the world around us, or from the promptings of our own heart and mind. There are chiefly two sources from which temptation arises from within ourselves. One is the lust of passion, of eager desire, which allures and captivates us; the other is pride, high-mindedness and self-will, which leads us to be reckless of danger, and impatient of restraint. And there are endless opportunities without us, to which we are exposed, circumstances of various kinds, which continually excite our passions, often such as we cannot avoid, or into which we may enter without thought or care.

There are two incidents in the history of the Passion which illustrate these two forms of temptation; there is the case of Judas, and there is the case of S. Peter. In both these cases we see the acting and reacting of inward feelings and outward inducements.

First, in the case of Judas. He had cherished the passion of covetousness, and it had grown strong in his heart, so that it was ready to be excited by opportunity. And then came the idea suggested to him from without, that he might gain a sum of money by

selling his Master. Whether he knew that he was selling Him to death, or whether, as some think, he fancied that our LORD would deliver Himself at His will by the exercise of His miraculous power, matters little as to the subject we are considering. Supposing he had this idea, it is only an instance of the too frequent cases in which men fancy that the sin which they desire to commit will cause no harm to others.

Again, S. Peter had lurking within him the other source of danger which I have mentioned, a presumptuous spirit, a bold heedless will. And so he enters the judgment hall, and then there comes suddenly upon him a temptation he had not anticipated—the fear that he too might be put to shame, and seized by the persecutors. The frail man sank under the trial. He had presumptuously rushed unprepared into the very circumstances that most keenly tried his undisciplined nature.

These are instances of what is continually happening, and what we may readily apply to ourselves. But this is not the whole mystery of temptation. The real power that was acting upon these men lay within and behind the circumstances that appear at first sight. Our evil passions may be excited by the influence which another person has over us. A fellow-creature may tempt another to his destruction,

and drive him on into the depths of sin. And there is to us all, one who thus acts, unseen, with a very subtle power,—and he it was who was acting at the time of the Passion upon our LORD and upon His disciples. After our LORD'S temptation in the wilderness it is written, that Satan departed from Him "for a season"—he was to return, and the time of his return was the time of the Passion, for our LORD said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness."<sup>1</sup>

And indeed in some deep mystery Satan acts within and behind the temptations that affect us ; he excites our passions and desires, he draws the sinner onward and downward, it may be till it is too late to repent, and the man is lost.

Further, it is important to observe that these two petitions go far beyond the petition which precedes them. We are asking that when we are forgiven, we may be saved from all possibility of a relapse. We are asking that the passions which have led us astray may be stayed back,—that our pride may be subdued and taken away. We are asking that the evil spirit who strove with our LORD on the Cross, and who seeks to destroy His servants, may be driven far from us ; that we may be kept free and unsullied

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xxii. 53.

and undisturbed by the power of evil that mastered us before,—that we may be saved for ever.

Different interpretations have been given of the words, “lead us not into.” But simply viewed they come to the same conclusion. They ask of GOD that we may not be suffered to fall if temptation comes ; that we may be spared temptations that are more than we can bear, or that there may be a way of escape, that we may be brought safely through. They imply that GOD orders the circumstances of our lives, that He may direct them as He will, that He is able to make us more than conquerors, if in His wisdom He design that we should bear any trial, and this for His glory as well as for our good ; that His grace may prevail in us in the midst of the trial.

Let us turn more especially to the last petition, “Deliver us from evil.” The deliverance meant is not merely from sinning, but from the power, and from the consciousness of sin ; deliverance also from the punishment which follows sin ; deliverance also from pain and trial whether for others or ourselves,—and not only in this world, but from the worst evil, the pain and torment of hell—the pains which will afflict the soul which has not found in JESUS the fullness of peace through His atoning love.



Let me suggest further what thoughts and affections may be aroused in our hearts while we offer these petitions, while we look, as on this day, on what sin brought on our LORD.

First, a dread of sin,—a dread of what sin may bring upon us, from the knowledge of what it *has* brought; of the consequences incurred. How can we urge the petition that the power of sin may be stayed back in us, unless there is a very great horror of what sin has brought on the Great Sufferer, CHRIST, Who died for our sins? Looking on the Face of the Crucified, should we not say, “it is enough; let us not aggravate His wounds; let us not be guilty of causing the necessity for so much suffering; let us not ‘crucify the SON of GOD afresh;’ let us not now pierce His sacred heart by the feeling of sorrow (if it can reach Him), that His suffering was in vain.” Surely there must be dread in all loyal loving hearts, to grieve the heart of the Sinless Sufferer, and, if it be felt, it would surely be shown in keeping back from objects which are likely to lead us into sin, to excite passions, to stir to risings of evil thoughts; it should be shown in avoiding the circumstances or scenes that led to sin, avoiding all that recalls it to us in its tempting aspect.

Secondly, a sense of weakness. We cannot help

knowing from past experience the strength of passion, the danger of rash presumption, and our difficulty of holding back the reins of these forces within us, feeling too that they have the greater strength over us from the fact that we have yielded to them before, and fearing all the consequences of yielding unless GOD sustain and protect us.

If we are rightly to ask not to be "led into temptation," it must be with this feeling,—that we are helpless of ourselves, that we need His strength Who died not only to forgive sin, but also to give life; to cleanse from the stain and guilt, and stay the power of evil, and not merely to free from the penalty; that we need renewed strength at the very first approach of the enemy.

Thirdly, we should offer this petition in hope,—in the hope that all this of which I have spoken will be done for us by the mighty power which shows forth His wonderful love in a call to rise and overcome the feeling of despair, the desponding thoughts that arise at times, and would make us feel that we can never ourselves conquer the evil which has conquered us before. It is only as we dwell on the perfect work of the SON of GOD, that this hope can become a reality; that we can trust that we shall be safe, when the fire is burning within us, and we

feel the force of the old temptations. Hope will spring up as we look on into the unseen world, and see the glory that has been attained through suffering, and the blessedness that surely awaits us if we persevere, and are patient, and resist in the power which worketh in us.

These three affections should be present in our minds if we would breathe these petitions aright,—terror of sin; consciousness of needing instant help; full hope of receiving this aid. He Who has been tempted in all things like as we are, and is “able to succour us” when we are tempted, and is “touched with the feeling of all our infirmities,”—He surely will not “leave us nor forsake us.” It is His glory that we should be His triumph, in the day of the manifestation of the sons of GOD, “in whom He will be glorified.”

## VIII.

**For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the  
Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>1</sup>**

**A**FTER going through the several petitions of this great prayer which JESUS taught us, there yet remains the concluding part for our consideration. And this part may be fitly considered in connection with this Easter season ; for what is “the kingdom, the power, and the glory” spoken of in the prayer but what JESUS Himself entered into at His resurrection ? We contemplate Him returning to His FATHER to receive the crown and fruit of His toil and His suffering, and we must needs keep Him continually before our minds while we dwell on the meaning of these words, how having “endured the cross, and despising the shame,” He entered into the glory of His FATHER, to abide in it for ever.

We may consider these concluding words of the

<sup>1</sup> Preached on Low Sunday.

LORD'S Prayer under two aspects,—first as viewed in themselves alone, secondly as viewed in their connection with the preceding petitions.

And first, let us look at these words in themselves. They are an ascription of praise offered to Almighty GOD in acknowledgment of what He is, and what He does. The words that go before are petitions,—the cry of sinful helpless creatures, asking for what they need and desire. But if we were to stop there, our worship would not resemble that which is continually being offered up before GOD in the Heavens, and in this heavenly worship we have a real part, however unworthily, through our union with the Blessed in JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

We use this prayer sometimes without this ascription of praise. It is thus used in the penitential parts of the service, as, for instance, when the LORD'S Prayer immediately follows what is called the lesser Litany ; "LORD, have mercy upon us ; CHRIST, have mercy upon us ;" and again in the beginning of the Communion Service, before the commandments are said, and the petition, "LORD, have mercy upon us," follows each commandment,—the penitential preparation for our taking part in the Eucharistic mystery. In our Mattins and Evensong, after the general confession and absolution, when the LORD'S Prayer is no longer

penitential, but uttered by those who have just confessed their faults ; and again in the Communion Service, after the holy offering has been made, and we have communicated in the Divine mysteries, and we are in CHRIST and He in us, then the prayer has the doxology, as it is called, at the end, because praise becomes the proper state of those who are cleansed through repentance and renewed in newness of life. The LORD'S Prayer would be incomplete, inadequate, without this addition. For men redeemed and forgiven cannot rightly approach GOD without praise ; else they would omit that which connects them with the heavenly worship, and which shows our faith and joy in the victory which our LORD obtained for us, when entering into His glory.

Further, these last words form an essential portion of our address to GOD, as we shall see more clearly if we consider the substance of this ascription of praise. There are four points spoken of,—“the kingdom, the power, the glory,” and these are described as “eternal,” for this is the meaning of the last expression, “for ever and ever.”

These three ascriptions are but the consequences of our LORD'S redeeming love, proofs of the Son of Man having entered into a perfect union with the FATHER, of the Incarnate GOD partaking of the

FATHER'S infinite majesty as the fruit of His sufferings and death. For what is "the kingdom," but that spiritual reign of CHRIST which the FATHER hath given Him, His reign over the multitude of His elect? And what is "the power," but the power which the FATHER hath given to the SON, because He is the Son of Man, and which He was to exercise in sympathy towards His fellow man, His brethren according to the flesh, as He says, "All power is given Me in heaven and in earth?" And what is "the glory," but the brightness of the FATHER'S presence, the halo of light around the invisible Godhead, shining in the face of CHRIST JESUS, because of the merit of His Passion, and through Him and in Him reflected on the faces of His elect? And what again is "for ever and ever," but that eternal life which He won for us, having conquered death through the death which He voluntarily underwent for our sake?

Let us further look at these ascriptions of praise in their relation to what has gone before. They are connected with the preceding petitions by the word "for." We offer up all the petitions with this ascription. Very much hangs upon that "for." It expresses first the grounds of the assurance with which we approach the FATHER. It expresses the certainty

with which we ask, the certainty on which we rest all our hopes. "Grant us this—and this" we say, and why? "For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." It brings out the great truth of the difference that there is between true prayer offered through CHRIST, and prayer not offered in such faith, and consequently the difference of the power animating Christian prayer. We may offer the same prayer in the same words, but with a very different spirit, and consequently with very different power and acceptableness.

There is the prayer which proceeds from the lips alone without the heart going with it—such is the prayer of the formal and careless worshipper, perhaps even of the hypocrite. There can be no efficacy in such a prayer, no hope that it can reach the ear of GOD. Again, there is prayer that comes from the heart, but the heart of a waverer who does not believe that his prayer is heard, who does not feel any ground of trust in his soul that gives reality to what he says to his GOD. Of such an one S. James says, "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the LORD."<sup>1</sup> Again, there is the prayer of faith, the prayer of one who believes that he shall be heard, and that, if it is the will of GOD, it will be

<sup>1</sup> S. James i. 7.



answered for his good ; the prayer that believes that there is in GOD power to give and willingness to give—the “effectual fervent prayer” of which the same Apostle says, that it “availeth much.” He exemplifies, as you will remember, the reality and power of such prayer, by the case of Elijah. “Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain : and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”<sup>1</sup> It is the prayer, which rests on the sense of Divine power and Divine love : it is the prayer of certitude, of one sure that his prayer will reach GOD, move His heart, gain the result desired if it be according to His will.

True prayer depends partly on the sense of need ; partly on the belief that Almighty GOD can and will give. Do you think the beggar by the roadside would act with such persistence, if he did not believe that he of whom he asked had the power to relieve him ? Would he ask those from whom he does not expect to get the aid he needs ? Is not his earnestness founded on the certainty, that what he craves for is in our power to give ? It is a real pe-

<sup>1</sup> S. James v. 17, 18.

tion, because it is with the consciousness of the power of him from whom he asks.

It is precisely the same in our approach to GOD. Prayer is real just in proportion to the reality of the belief on which it is founded, and the sense of the power and will of Him Whom we address. Each petition in our LORD'S Prayer has its ground of hope, because addressed to Him Who reigns in "the Kingdom," and has "the Power" to give what we ask. But this is not all. Why the "Glory" as well as the "Power?" It is because the glory of GOD is concerned in the salvation of His elect—because He increases His glory by His faithfulness to His promise to those whom He has redeemed; because He has bound Himself by a covenant to give to His SON the fruits of His Passion, and in giving to His SON these results of the merits which He obtained by the Sacrifice of Himself, is Himself honoured and magnified through the outgoings of His Divine Love in blessing and serving those who are in themselves unworthy, but who are accepted as worthy for the sake of His SON Who died for them. As we utter the words, we are appealing to GOD the FATHER, because of the honour and the truth of the GOD of the everlasting covenant, in making good to the elect the fulness of the Divine promise.

Mark, lastly, how this great ascription of praise to the honour and glory of GOD has an enduring and everlasting significance. It will continue endlessly when the need of prayer has ceased, when all the wants of humanity are richly supplied, when there will be heard only the eternal hymn of praise, as eternal as GOD Himself, to be heard throughout the endless ages in the highest heavens, diffusing everywhere far and wide a ceaseless joy, "Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory." And these words of praise will ever sound forth from the lips of the redeemed, mingled with endless thanksgivings for answered prayers, for satisfied longings ; from the depths of hearts filled with all the fulness of GOD.

Lastly, these petitions together with this ascription of praise are sealed by the "Amen," which closes the prayer. It means, So let it be, so we believe, so we look to Thee, O GOD, for ever and ever. For all is Thine ; all cometh from Thee, and all is fulfilled only as we become perfectly one with Thee, and Thy will is fulfilled in us for evermore.

# The History of Elijah.

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## I.

### The Calling of God.

*“And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.”—*  
1 Kings xvii. 1.

THE lives recorded in the Holy Scriptures are for our example and our warning. They show how men of like passions with ourselves felt and acted, and how GOD dealt with them. They are one great means of instruction.

I have selected the history of one of the greatest of GOD’S servants, recorded in the Old Testament, that with GOD’S blessing we may gather from it some useful lessons to deepen our spiritual life, to make us more faithful and true.

The text describes the opening scene of a wonder-

ful history. In the previous chapter we learn the circumstances under which it occurred. The people of Israel had fallen away from the true faith, partly in consequence of the great schism, when the calves were set up by Jeroboam at Dan and at Bethel, partly because of the idolatries introduced from the surrounding nations, more especially the foul worship of Baal and Ashtaroath, mainly through the influence of Jezebel, the wife of Ahab. With the loss of faith, and the prevalence of their false and loathsome idolatries, there followed an universal decay of morals. From the sovereign on his throne to the lowest of the people, the nation as a whole had apostatised from GOD and His covenant.

Suddenly one day there appeared before the king a man of austere countenance, and majestic bearing, such as S. John the Baptist is described in the New Testament, and unlike other men. It was Elijah the prophet ; and as he stood face to face before Ahab, he denounced the threatened judgment of GOD upon himself and his kingdom. "As the LORD GOD of Israel liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

It is an instance of the preternatural power that may be possessed by one man, in whom there exists a firm belief in the unseen world, and in the certainty

of the presence and support of GOD, and a consciousness of a Divine commission to declare His will. But how could he, a man like ourselves, presume to utter such a judgment, that the heavens should be shut, and the rain cease, and this at his own word? Our LORD declared that such power might be given to those whom in His Divine providence He may choose to be His instruments, the agents of His miraculous interpositions. "If ye have faith," He once said to His Apostles, "as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and cast into the sea, and nothing shall be impossible to you."<sup>1</sup> If there be, that is to say, "faith" of this high order, a special inspiration, accompanied with the assurance of preternatural aid, Almighty GOD will work through such agency.

Of this act of Elijah's we have an explanation given by S. James in the closing words of his Epistle, when speaking of the power that may be vouchsafed to prayer, he selects as an example this very incident: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xvii. 20.

prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."<sup>1</sup>

Elijah thus became the chosen instrument of the judgments of GOD upon sin, as afterwards of His mercy. Having uttered this dread sentence, Elijah passed away from the presence of the king, and it appears from the account given to us, that even as the words were spoken the judgment began to work over the whole land. What that judgment involved we may learn<sup>2</sup> from what we have lately read with universal horror of a similar visitation among the millions of the inhabitants of China—the fearful consequences of the drying up of the fountains of the earth, the closing of the windows of heaven, followed by the famishing of man and beast, with all the frightful details of hopeless, yet slowly protracted death.

What did Elijah himself now do ?

The natural impulse would have been to escape from the country ; to go down, as in earlier days Abraham under like circumstances had done to Egypt, or some far land beyond the reach of the

<sup>1</sup> S. James v. 16—18.

<sup>2</sup> The terrible famine that desolated great territories of China had lately occurred, and collections in aid of the suffering, had been made at the Parish Church of Clewer, as elsewhere throughout England.

terrible suffering of the threatened famine. But no! he would himself suffer, together with his suffering countrymen. He would commit himself in loving sympathy together with the afflicted people, during the continuance of the sorrows he had foretold, to whatever GOD might will for him. He trusted to be guided and to be upheld, as GOD might appoint.

And did the guidance and the support fail? Immediately "the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there."<sup>1</sup>

Elijah's trust in the care of Almighty GOD was not disappointed. He was sustained partly by natural, partly by supernatural means. The brook for a while continued to flow as of old, and the ravens, the ravenous birds of the air were chosen, we cannot doubt, in order to show that GOD, rather than suffer His faithful servants to perish, would employ the most unlikely instruments to fulfil His purposes.

After a time the brook failed. And then there came a further message to Elijah, and one that involved a fresh trial. Though it ensured a continu-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 2—4.



ance of support, yet it was still to be through the least likely means. He was bidden to go to a heathen land, and one specially dangerous to him, for it was the very country from whence the heathen Queen had come, who had shown such bitter enmity to GOD'S servants.

“ And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there : behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.”<sup>1</sup>

Elijah, trusting to this assurance of Divine protection, goes forth, facing the dangers which beset him among the heathen people, where the malice of Jezebel might follow him, to seek the support he needed, yet where it might be least looked for, among the poorest of the land.

What occurred is a striking instance how the true faith of one person may sustain the failing faith of another. There was a woman, who, like many others, such as the Syrophenician woman in the days of our LORD, outside the Holy Land, believed and trusted in the GOD of Israel, who possessed some faint knowledge of the truth, and though far off from the temple

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 9.

worship, cherished a belief in the great promises ensured to the world through the Mosaic covenant. But the faith of the "widow of Sarepta" was now failing. She was sinking into despair under continued suffering. She was, as Elijah came to her home, gathering sticks to dress what she believed to be her last meal for her fatherless child, before she laid him down to die, and herself die also.

"Behold," she said, "I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in, and dress it" (the handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse) "for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die."<sup>1</sup>

Observe the watchful care and mercy extended over the poor woman, as well as over the prophet. At the very moment when her last hope was failing her, her last stay taken away, at her extremest need, the prophet of GOD appears, to kindle her faint heart to fresh trust, and stir her mind with renewed assurance in the living GOD. The prophet and the poor woman lived on, day after day, in the marvellous realisation of continued miraculous support, while "the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail."

Such is the first incident recorded for us in Elijah's history. Let us consider one special point in it, which shows how the prophet was strengthened with

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 12.

such power, and sustained so patiently, so calmly, and filled with such fervent zeal.

We find, I think, the interpretation of this secret of his life in the words he addressed to King Ahab, and which have been quoted as my text. "As the LORD liveth," he said, "*before Whom I stand.*" The secret of his steadfastness, his energy, is shown in these brief words,—"*before Whom I stand.*" He lived, that is to say, in the presence of GOD, as a servant, watchful to catch the slightest indication of His will. He saw through created things the Creator Himself, Who ordered and ruled all their movements. He saw through the covenant given by Moses, what the mind was of Him Who gave it. He saw the wisdom, the righteousness, and the love of Him Who dwelt in the midst of His people. He stood before Him a being ever ready to minister at His bidding. For such is the import of the expression, "*stand before Him.*" Whatever it might cost him of danger, or of self-sacrifice, he was ready to fulfil it. He held his life in his hand, in the instant readiness to go forth to act, or to rest passively and endure. In that attitude of mind and that consciousness of dependence on the call of GOD, he bore up against trial and persecution, in loneliness and uncertainty as to what the next hour might bring forth, speaking the

words he was commanded to speak, doing the thing he was sent to do, against all earthly powers, untroubled, unquestioning.

This lesson of patient trust and faithful duty, I would that the good Spirit of GOD would bring home to us to-day. We are not indeed singled out for such miraculous agencies, such extraordinary commissions, as Elijah was : but we all have our own special callings, our own convictions of truth, our own duties, our own surroundings, circumstances which call for a true witness as to what we believe, and what we are bound to fulfil.

Our frail hearts are often tempted to fear, or to despondency, to shrink from duty, or from self-sacrifice, out of dread of man, or reluctance to make the necessary effort, from sloth or cowardice, while yet we have the undoubting consciousness of what we ought to do or to say ; and continually in the hour of trial we are found wanting. How then are we to avoid such failures ? how strengthen ourselves against the oft-recurring temptation ? how be brave and enduring ?

The lesson on which we have been dwelling, is in truth the one which is of all the most necessary and the most sure. It is to live in the presence of the living and the life-giving GOD ; to fear Him more

than we fear man : to keep in memory the certainty and the awfulness of His judgments—to feel that it is more blessed to suffer than to be false to our duty—to feel the glory of being as one sent with a special charge—to be sure that, come what will, let what may befall us, He will uphold and support us, if we are true, that “wisdom is justified of her children.”<sup>1</sup>

If our prospects and hopes for the future fail, if we are subject to difficulties from narrow circumstances, or anxieties in business, or loss of friends, or from any one of the thousand cares that press on human life in this world,—it is our strength to believe that He Who has placed us where we are, has at His command all the resources of nature, that He can cause the brook to flow and the ravens to minister to our need, or, if even they fail, can raise up other supports under least likely appearances, causing the one barrel of meal not to waste, the one cruse of oil not to fail,—can bring unexpected joy to the lonely heart, and free the anxious mind from trouble. If again and again the desires of our soul are disappointed, if dearest friends are lost to us, if doubt crosses the mind as to whether prayer to the GOD of heaven is of any avail, whether the LORD of the

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xi. 19.

universe will attend to the wants of creatures such as we are, unworthy and insignificant, and hear our faltering cries, there is surely a strength of unfailing support in such records of His Word as we have been dwelling on. Surely it quickens the heart to ponder such a tale as this—to contemplate the Divine care, ever watchful, ever ready,—ever rich in resource, alike for the prophet, or for the widow in her lone retired home,—equally for one engaged in a great supernatural commission, or one most unnoticed by the world, whose only charge is to provide the day's food for her famishing child.

GOD is true; He will never fail His own; He wearies not, nor slumbers. Believe that He listens to the prayers we offer, that He answers them according to His own wisdom, that He cannot in His all-seeing Providence overlook anything, any one, that He has made, though His way may be “in the sea, and His paths in the great waters” of a mysterious Providence. He can raise up the needed relief, or pour in the longed-for consolation, or supply the strength, in unexpected ways, through unlooked for means, even as He wills, for those who trust to His care. Only be sure to live on as one “standing before Him,” listening for His call, depending on His command, ready to act, or to suffer,

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in the profound conviction that He lives, that He is a loving FATHER, that He is the Ruler of all things, that He is the protector and guardian specially of them that believe, that He will bear them up in the midst of dangers, free them from coming judgments, guide them surely by the still waters, making all things work together for good to them that love Him, to them who "cast all their cares on Him, because He careth for them."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. Pet. v. 7.

## II.

### The resolved Will.

*“And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.”—*  
1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.

WE left Elijah in retirement with the widow of Zarephath, the famine with all its horrors still brooding over the land, GOD’S judgment on sin as yet unappeased, and with no prospect of repentance among the people.

And now GOD purposed to employ other means to touch the hearts of the king and his people. For GOD varies His dealings, mingling mercy with His judgments, at one time awakening fears, again at another time winning them by His compassions, so that He may bring home His banished ones.

The scene to which I am about to draw your attention to-day is another meeting of the Prophet



and the king. For GOD had bidden Elijah to go forth and meet Ahab, even when his life was threatened, and Ahab had hardened his heart, like another Pharaoh, all the more because of the severity of the famine. Elijah went, trusting to the support of GOD'S Presence, into this fresh danger.

When they met, Ahab said to Elijah, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" The question bespoke the hardness of Ahab's heart. It was the natural working of human pride. Because he was checked, because he was not suffered to follow his own idolatrous desires, undisturbed, unresisted, his wrath arose within him, and he cast on the messenger of GOD, who had been sent specially to warn him, the blame of the terrible judgment that had fallen on the land and on the people.

How common is this feeling! how constantly shown in the ordinary details of human life equally as on such momentous occasions as we are now contemplating! If ever a strong wish possesses us, and we meet with hindrances, are checked by one who has the courage to warn us of the risk we run, tells us the plain though unpleasant truth; or if conscience rises and forbids us to indulge the eager impulse, on which our mind is set,—is it not often in our case, as it was in that of Ahab? do we not,

like him, rise up against the power that checks us, and charge the hinderer as if he were the disturber of our peace, rise up even against the friend who kindly warns us, accusing him as if he were troubling us, as if he were the cause of our suffering?

And the same answer that Elijah made to Ahab, would equally in such a case apply to us: "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim."

The disturbance of our peace has arisen from our own wilfulness; from our unchastened desires; from our want of conformity with the will of GOD. The wrong is in ourselves, not in the hindrances we meet with, nor in those who warn us of our evil or dangerous purposes.

It was at this meeting that GOD directed Elijah to make a fresh effort of miraculous power to deliver the fallen people from the bondage of idolatry, and the false ideas which possessed them. Then followed that striking and eventful scene on Mount Carmel, when the priests of the idol temples were gathered together in full force, and were bid to prove, if they could, the truth of their belief.

On a lofty hill overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, amid surroundings of majestic natural beauty, there

were assembled the king and his court, the four hundred and fifty priests of the idol temples and their retinue, and the multitude of the excited populace.

The Prophet of GOD stood alone, opposed to them, the one witness of the truth, the one asserter of the claims of the holy GOD, the only one who had faith to believe in the commission with which he was charged. He stood there in the face of the whole nation, alone, as it seemed, for those who yet remained faithful among the Israelites in the land of Judah, had either hid themselves for safety, or looked passively on in a sense of hopelessness.

The sign by which the truth of the Living GOD was to assert itself, was fire to be sent down from heaven to consume the sacrifice. The priests of Baal took a bullock and laid it on the altar, and cried to their idol, and waited anxiously, hour after hour, "from morning until the evening," exercising their wild acts of idolatrous devotion, after their manner, cutting themselves with knives, with savage motions and violent clamour. But it was all in vain. And then about the ninth hour, 3 o'clock, when the sun had declined in the heavens, the accustomed hour of offering the Evening Sacrifice in the Temple on Mount Moriah, Elijah drew near. He first repaired the "Altar of GOD" that was broken down; he

gathered together the stones, and laid the wood in order, and placed the victim upon the restored altar, and then in the face of the astonished multitude offered up the prayer of faith, that GOD would manifest Himself by an unmistakeable sign before the people.

It was a wonderful crisis in the history of that people. But to us, and to the end of time, it is a witness of the power of individual faith, showing what one man may do, or bear, if strong in convictions of the truth, in the midst of an unbelieving world. It proves what one may do, in any society, under any circumstances, or in any household, in the midst of divisions and disputes, if he dare stand forth for GOD when neglected or despised for some Baal of idol worship,—what at a great crisis of a nation's, or a family's history, may be done, if in a single heart there dwell faith unshaken, and moral courage; if but a single voice be uplifted, bold to bear witness to the eternal truth; if the life of any single soul be stirred with a brave resolve to save, whether in smaller circles, or when man strives with man, at some great social crisis, and with a pure-hearted love stands on the side of GOD against all external power, against all delusions of the enemy.

Listen to the Prophet's prayer. "LORD GOD of

Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day, that Thou art GOD in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word: Hear me, O LORD, hear me; that this people may know that Thou art the LORD GOD, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again." The answer to the prayer was instantaneous. Suddenly the fire came down out of heaven, and burnt up the victim laid on the altar, "and the wood, and the stones of the altar, and licked up the water that ran round about in the trench." It came with all the force of an irresistible appeal to support the earnest exhortation with which Elijah had pleaded with the people before the signal miracle was wrought; "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be GOD, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him."

Let us consider what was meant by this appeal. It implied that if the Prophet's word proved true, they were to accept it with no faltering mind, with their whole heart. He claimed that theirs should be no divided service, no half-hearted obedience, partly for GOD, partly for Baal; partly for GOD, partly for the world, as though a man might reserve to himself what he willed of his heart's allegiance. He besought them, pressed on them the necessity of cling-

ing to the truth, whatever it might cost, and in spite of all seeming attractions which error or falsehood might assume. He urged the necessity of making up their mind and adhering steadfastly to their convictions.

What followed in the case of the Israelites proved that only a partial reformation resulted from this miraculous manifestation of GOD, and yet it is to be noted, how quickly the compassionate mercy of GOD responded to the first movement of repentance. There was no pause, for, in the touching language of Holy Scripture, GOD "will wait that He may be gracious."<sup>1</sup> The famine was instantly to cease. Elijah says to Ahab, "Get thee up, for there is a sound of abundance of rain."<sup>2</sup> It was the prophetic consciousness of the approaching storm. And then follows that beautiful scene when Elijah withdrew from the crowd, and retreating into solitude, gave himself to prayer; and when he bid his servant go and look out upon the sea, again and again, until seven times, till at last, as the Prophet foretold, "a little cloud, like a man's hand," rose on the horizon, and quickly "the heavens were black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." It was the Prophet's triumph. Before the tempest broke, he bid his servant, "Go up, say unto

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxx. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 41.

Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."

Elijah now places himself before the king and the people in another attitude; he runs before the chariot of Ahab, as though he were his servant. It was, we may believe, intended to show that it was not himself who had wielded the mighty power, and inflicted the awful judgment, and that not in his own name he had assumed the austere character of the reprover,—that it was not himself, but his Divine Master,—that for himself he was ever ready to be at the king's command, if but the king would do the will of the LORD.

There are lessons here which apply at all times. If we do wrong, and persist in our wrong doing, how do hindrances and difficulties, and fears of coming judgments surround us on every side; or, if not outwardly, yet how within our own heart scruples and fears disturb us, GOD speaking in our conscience. If there is no one by to speak for Him, GOD speaks within the man himself. Sooner or later we must meet the Judge, and unless the conscience is seared and hardened, who could then be unmoved or undismayed?

And are there not some here who know the blessedness that is felt, if one who has sinned is resolved

to retrace his steps and to repent ; to acknowledge before it is too late that "the LORD He is GOD," that there is but one GOD and one Mediator between GOD and man, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, one only way of peace, and say, "The LORD, He shall be my GOD?" If but the firm resolve be made, to refuse the evil and choose the good, how instantly does the struggle cease! how rapid the change! The tears that gush from the eyes, the deep stirrings felt within the heart as contrition works, speak peace,—and are not these yearnings answered by the showers of grace, by the rain of the Spirit, rich and fruitful, satisfying the famished soul, and refreshing the weary? As surely as the green herbage and flowers of the earth which sprung up in the land of Israel after the long drought, bore witness to the loving-kindness of GOD to the Israelites pining for hunger, so too does the peace and brightness which visit the heart of the penitent tell of the long-suffering pity and compassion of GOD to the souls of men.

Is there any one here who is setting his heart against any known truth, against any clear warning? is any one now cherishing a forbidden desire, or neglecting a known duty? let such a one hear the voice which speaks through all time, calling to repentance. Let him muse within himself, and think



how far better to live to GOD, than to leave Him, for the sake, it may be, of a passing indulgence, or some fleeting joy, some idol of the heart which self-deceiving fancy has clothed with a false beauty. Let him learn what a fulness of blessing may be shed forth around and within him in a return to the truth by the humble acknowledgment of error, by yielding to the call which conscience seals with the assurance, that repentance is the only way of rest, equally as of life eternal, to the soul that has been led astray by the snares of the deceiver.

### III.

#### The failing Heart.

*"Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."—1 Kings xix. 2—4.*

TO-DAY I have to lead your thoughts to a very different scene in the history of Elijah, a strong contrast to that on which we have been dwelling. It is an instance of one of those rapid changes to which our nature is subject,—conscious as we are, at one time of being so strong in faith, at another time, and it may be quite suddenly, so weak,—at one time fervent in prayer, at another dead and cold,—one moment full of zeal and projects of active service, the next moment faint-hearted and despondent at the least discouragement.

It is of such a sudden collapse in the case of Elijah, that I have now to speak.

Bear in mind how he appeared when last we saw him,—standing in the face of the king, and the idolatrous priests, and the excited multitude, alone, bearing witness to the truth, asserting the claims of the true GOD, at the risk of his life, and then putting forth miraculous power, calling down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice, and by the force of his prayer opening the heavens that they might give forth the abundance of rain to revive the fruits of the earth, and relieve the famished multitudes.

See how the same man now appears, a fugitive, seeking a refuge in the wilderness, abandoning his post of duty, lying down in despair, seeing no rest or safety but in death.

To what are we to ascribe this change?

Partly, no doubt, it was a reaction after the great excitement, the exhaustion of the agitating scene in which he had been the one agent, on whom the greatest cause that can stir the mind and heart of man then depended—bodily and mental weariness sinking under the effects of an extraordinary effort. We know how difficult it is, when through exhaustion and weariness we become faint and depressed, how

difficult it is to keep before us, fresh and clear, the vision of the unseen world, and the objects of faith. And there were two anxieties pressing on him, which would unavoidably weigh on his mind with a force which would not be felt in the time of excitement and active conflict, but in the dark broodings of despondency would fall heavily on the soul. The threatenings of death, and of cruelty worse than death, by which he had been so unmoved before—for his life had long been in danger—these began now to rise up in his mind with sudden and unexpected alarm.

The text shows how Jezebel, who completely swayed the heart of Ahab to her will, had shown a more determined enmity, and more bitter resolution to destroy him, after the tidings of the slaughter of the priests of Baal had reached her. "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time."

Elijah trembled as he had never done before, at this fresh persecution, and fled from the terrors of this more determined malice.

Nor was this all that brooded heavily on Elijah's sinking heart. There was another weight pressing yet more sadly on him, absorbed as he was in GOD's service as the one object of his life. It was the feeling that all his efforts had failed ; that after all there was but a partial acknowledgment of GOD's claims by the people, no real abandonment of idolatry, no real change of heart, that there was the same disposition on the part of Ahab and Jezebel to persecute the servants of GOD,—the same disposition to submit to their will and follow their guidance, on the part of the people,—that his witness, as well as the miracles which GOD had wrought through him, had been ineffectual. He saw no prospect of success, no glimpse of hope, nothing more to be done. After the long strain and continued exertion, disappointment sank the more deeply into his soul. He lost the sense of Divine support which before he had so richly enjoyed, and which had been his real strength. His past experiences of Divine power faded from his mind. It had no effect on him, that Obadiah still remained faithful even in the king's palace, nor that he had "fed the prophets of the LORD by fifty in a cave;" that even beyond the borders of the land of Israel, many perhaps, such as the widow of Sarepta, were living a life of faith in the GOD of Israel ; that there were

many still left in the land of Judah who had not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. In his fear and his weariness, as the cloud of despair and disappointment settled on his soul, looking only on the dark side of the picture, he lay down ready and willing to die.

It was an instance of what common experience testifies,—how strongest natures are at times most liable to saddest alternations of feeling—how the more ardent the desires the greater are the possibilities of an entire collapse—how often terrible struggles, though mostly hidden from the world, are the trials that attend on high aims and self-sacrificing efforts. Many have sunk hopelessly under such a conflict, nor can any one rightly judge of such profound suffering, except those who in loneliness of heart, bereft as it seems of all sympathy, have been called to maintain a great cause against persistent opposition, and with no apparent sign of success to brighten the prospect.

Yet the trial thus keenly felt, may be at the very time when relief is close at hand, Almighty GOD preparing the way for some unlooked for blessing on His servant's labours. So it was in this case, that while Elijah lay prostrate in his despair, there occurred that wonderful intervention of Divine Providence, making

even the desert to be the scene of angelic ministries of love.

“As he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of GOD.”<sup>1</sup>

Elijah had left the path of duty, and had failed GOD at a great crisis. He had yielded to the infirmities of a fleshly nature, his faith darkened by despair, and hope sunk within him. But GOD had not deserted His servant in his weak estate. He is led back by a merciful interposition of miraculous power. Food was provided in the wilderness, and he was gifted with supernatural grace maintaining his strength during the journey in the wilderness, like another Moses, taken up into the mountain to see GOD after his prolonged fast, and his steps directed to the very same mountain where Moses had heard

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xix. 5—8.

GOD proclaiming Himself, "The LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."<sup>1</sup>

The object of this evidently was that Elijah, like Moses, might learn the mystery of the nature of GOD, and of His dealings with His people, and see his own sin in the light of GOD'S revelation of Himself; that he might repent, and return to fulfil his mission with renewed courage in the path of duty. He was to be taught what all must learn who have lost faith and departed from GOD, sinking under the trials by which faith was to have been purified. It was with him as GOD declared by His prophet Hosea, that He would guide all who fail through weakness, whom yet He purposes to employ as instruments of His love and witnesses of His power. "I will allure" them "and bring" them "into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto" them.<sup>2</sup>

Observe, the special trial on which we have been dwelling is one that the common world can never know. Those who trifle with sin, who are heedless and careless as to the honour of Almighty GOD, who take but low views of life, cannot know such conflicts

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Hosea ii. 14.



of feeling, such struggles of doubt and distrust. It is a trial which can only beset those who know the will of GOD and have followed His call ; who have devoted themselves to His service ; who work for Him ; who long to do good in their generation, who in their own experience have been conscious of His support, and the blessing of His Presence ; who have tasted the joy of the powers of the world to come, and to whose hearts GOD has spoken ; who have heard Him, and have taken in the great idea of a special vocation, of a purpose in their life, of what they can do for GOD, and for their fellow-creatures. Such persons only can be subject to the trials of heart, of which Elijah is such a signal instance.

It is when after much prayer, and no answer has come ; when the heart is weary with toil, and no prospect of success has begun to dawn, but rather increasing darkness clouding the future ; when the sense of unsympathetic surroundings, of loneliness and desolation, beset the soul, all around us passing by unheeding, unable to understand what one feels or desires, perhaps mocking one's plans and objects, or throwing hindrances in the way ; when courage fails from mere weight of a continued burden—it is then and thus that despair and despondency tend to prevail. It may be so also in mere ordinary circum-

stances of any prolonged trial, that similar experiences are tasted. It is not indeed the first presence of the burden that tries the soul, but its continuing on day after day, with no appearance of change. In daily struggles with adverse circumstances, domestic cares, straitened means, disappointments through insincere friends, or failure of expectations, one distress succeeding another, the vexed soul is tempted to give up hope, and doubt the possibility of relief, or of good arising out of the evil, and then sinks utterly. Even those who in happier days have been found faithful, and even have borne severe trials well, may in some fresh difficulty, or loss, or disappointment, suddenly collapse, and lie "down under the juniper tree," and say, "It is enough ; I have believed in GOD ; I have placed my hand in the hands of GOD ; I have trusted Him, to be led by Him, and now He has failed me ; I am sick unto death, I am weary of my life ; I would gladly die."

There is great need to all of us, of much patience and prayer, and trust, and "hoping against hope," lest at some point of our course, we may faint and fail by the way—much need, whatever our circumstances be, to learn to trust in times of doubt or fear, to take things as they come, to believe that there is always a silver lining to the cloud, that GOD has a

purpose in all that He wills or allows ; that He can and will turn evil even into an instrument of good, that delays, hindrances, oppositions, are but testings of our faith, that even weariness and faintings of heart, and lowness of spirit, have their appointed work to do, that sooner or later, though in ways we think not of, perhaps the very object for which we had toiled will be accomplished, or if in different ways from what we had designed, yet that in His own way "wisdom will be justified of her children." The real blessing is for those who can endure unto the end, who are never weary in leaning upon GOD, "who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, immortality," who are ever "waiting on the LORD," that He may "renew their strength," and work out His will through them, or without them, even as it may be most pleasing to Him.

## IV.

### The Restoration.

*"And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there ; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah ?"—1 Kings xix. 9.*

THE position in which we last saw Elijah was this, —prostrate under the juniper tree, in the desert, wearied, disheartened, having lost faith in his work, in his mission, and in GOD Who had sent him, longing to die, rather than bear on in a life which seemed only a fruitless toil, suffering without apparent end, without relief, and with increased danger. We saw how, while he thus lay helplessly murmuring against his lot, GOD sent an angel, who fed him with miraculous food to sustain him in the journey he was to take, to meet GOD on Mount Horeb.

Thus far there had come to him the assurance of a continual support from an ever watchful Providence, and the nearness of the Divine Presence was felt even in the dreary wilderness.

We have now to consider how Elijah was led back to repentance, how his lost faith was renewed, and the lessons he learnt, and the change of mind he underwent, and how he was renewed in strength for the final accomplishment of his great mission.

His journey lasted forty days. This was not because of the distance. The distance he had to go was less than two hundred miles. The journey, we can hardly doubt, was prolonged for a different reason. It was part of the penitential discipline he needed. The number, forty, in the minds of the Israelites was connected with the idea of penitence. Forty days and forty nights Moses was in the mount before he received the commandments of the moral law.<sup>1</sup> Forty years the hosts of Israel journeyed in the wilderness before they could enter the Holy Land, because of their sin at Kadesh-barnea.<sup>2</sup>

And now Elijah was to pass a similar number of days in prayer and fasting before he could receive a fresh revelation of GOD, because of his loss of faith, and his dereliction of the path of duty. It was a time of retreat, during which he might commune with his own heart, looking back over the past, recalling his original mission, contrasting his own changed state of mind with the zeal and fervour which had once

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxiv. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Numb. xiii.

animated him. Elijah at last reached the sacred mountain where GOD had first revealed Himself to His people, and where He gave them the covenant.

Elijah on his arrival "entered into a cave and lodged there." There, it would seem, he remained some time, hidden in his solitary retreat, forced in upon himself by the silence and the stillness as of another world. Suddenly at last there came a voice, speaking to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It is the voice of reproof. "What is the work thou lookest to do here? Why hast thou left the path of duty, to which thou wast sent? Why hast thou shrunk from the toil, the suffering, which it involved? Was not the mission clear when thou didst say, Here am I, send me?"

Observe how the reproof came to him as a personal appeal, "What doest *thou*?" a solemn individual judgment, and this the more impressive from the mention of his name, "What doest thou here, *Elijah*?" We all know the force with which the mention of one's own name strikes upon the heart, especially when all around is still,—the silence unbroken by any other sound. It is a token of what the individual judgment at death will be when GOD first calls the soul to its dread account—that moment, the most awful, as the soul enters the unseen world, more

alarming than death, most terrifying to the conscience, if there be not the support and consolation which the Presence of JESUS and faith in His loving mercy give to remove the fear, and shed peace and hope in the passage through the valley of the shadow of death.

Such a personal appeal Elijah was called to answer, and what can he urge in his defence? He speaks complainingly, and adds even boastful words. He speaks not of his desertion of the path of duty, but of GOD having deserted him, as if there had been no good, no profit in serving the LORD, as if he had been hardly used, and suffered in vain, had met only opposition and reproach; that evil had triumphed, that GOD had suffered His cause to fail, and His servant to be despised. "I have been," thus he answers GOD, "very jealous for the LORD GOD of Hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I am left; and they seek my life to take it away."

And how can this pride of heart be subdued? how these complainings be hushed; how a consciousness of his sin, of his faithlessness in his ministry be brought home to him? how can fresh strength, renewed hope,—a brighter happier spirit be infused

into his soul? It was by GOD afresh revealing Himself,—by showing Elijah that his ways were not as GOD’S ways, nor his thoughts as GOD’S thoughts—that His own way of dealing with His creatures was different, and that His servants, if they would serve Him effectually, successfully, must learn of His Spirit, must be conformed to His mind, must learn what manner of spirit they must be of.

It is only thus that any true repentance can be wrought. There needs to be brought before the mind, not merely a fresh revelation of one’s self, of one’s own sins, of the causes of one’s fall, of the wrong of one’s own evil thoughts, of the consequences of one’s own follies and defects, but it is as necessary that a truer, deeper knowledge of GOD, of His character, of His modes of dealing, of His purposes, should be learnt. It is this contrast that has power to move, to stir, to put to shame, to alarm, to confound. It is as this contrast is perceived, that the Divine Spirit imparts a deeper knowledge of Himself, converts, transforms, awakens fresh views of life, fresh ideas of one’s mission, of the manner and spirit of one’s ministry, of the purpose for which life was given, and how life ought to be spent.

It was for this that the wonderful revelation on the mount took place. “And He said, Go forth, and



stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD ; but the LORD was not in the wind ; and after the wind an earthquake ; but the LORD was not in the earthquake ; and after the earthquake a fire ; but the LORD was not in the fire : and after the fire a still small voice."

The object of this wonderful scene was to bring home to Elijah's mind, that GOD was not, as he had been, impatient, fiery, eager to destroy, unable to endure, quick to abandon hope, violent and in extremes ; that GOD, unlike him, could bear with the sins of men, that He could wait for the convenient season, that He would not crush nor abandon the sinner, that He would employ different means of approach, of influence ; long-suffering, never giving up hope ; that His dealings might require the discipline of fear, of suffering, of trial, but that His power would be shown most chiefly in mercy and in pity ; that His purpose and peculiar work is seen in gentleness, in forbearance, in love, in the still calm appeal to the conscience, to the heart, when the storm of passion and the terror of remorse have passed.

The mysterious vision was to teach Elijah, that if

he were more like to GOD in spirit and in dealing with sinners, he would be more capable of winning souls, would more persuasively bring home GOD'S message to the people; that to fulfil his mission aright, he must be patient, forbearing, gentle; must believe that GOD is still present to work with him, though he might not see the fruit of his labour, nor signs of success, yet that hope should never fail, nor trust in his GOD Who sent him falter.

We read how Elijah's heart was bowed before the Presence of GOD, how he was moved to surrender himself in shame and sorrow. "And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood at the entering in of the cave." Yet it was not at once nor quickly, that the truth broke in upon his absorbed, self-pitying, saddened soul. For a second time the same voice of the living GOD spoke to him, and said the same words, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" and again, Elijah pleaded with the same complaint, and the same sense of disappointed hopes. "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of Hosts, because the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." Yet

evidently when Elijah spake these same words the second time it was not in the same spirit with which he had uttered them before, for GOD pardoned His servant's sin, and again sent him forth to fulfil a prophet's work, as though there had been no breach in his appointed course, no hindrances in the acceptance of his ministry, no loss of GOD'S favour in his momentous charge. "And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room."

It was a renewal of the first promise given to him when he was first called; a fresh charge with fresh duties to fulfil; an assurance that though the judgments of GOD may tarry, though He watcheth long to give time for repentance, yet that they will fall at last on the impenitent and hardened sinners; that while his work may have to be carried on in the midst of opposition, and in many a conflict, yet that, hidden perhaps from His servant's view and in secret, his work will not be in vain, will influence a remnant in whom the will of GOD will prevail, and His love find a true response, a faithful seed to perpetuate the covenant of

mercy to after ages. "And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay ; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

There are in this portion of Elijah's history two points which I would press on your attention.

First, whenever, either in the fulfilment of any bounden duty, or in undertaking some special good work for GOD, the success you looked for fails to come, if there is disappointment, and no apparent answer to prayer,—do not therefore think that GOD has deserted you, and disregarded the objects you have at heart, or that He is not actually co-operating with you, sympathising in your difficulties, conscious of your hindrances, or that in some way unknown to you, He may not be working out His will, and preparing for the accomplishment of your desires, though it may be slowly and hiddenly. Do not judge by the outward sense, or by visible signs, or think that you can understand the ways and thoughts of the living GOD, or know how or when He is pleased to fulfil His purposes, or what those purposes may be. Do not think that you can fathom the depths

of the Most Holy, the Omnipotent, of Him Who dwelleth unseen in eternity, or that those whom He calls to serve Him and carry out His will in this world are therefore necessarily favoured with a special insight into the ways of His providence. We must still trust Him, believe that He is greater, wiser, than ourselves,—that we are hasty, impulsive, and impatient, He, on the contrary, long-suffering and very pitiful, dwelling in the calm of His everlasting peace—that we must learn of Him to work on steadily, hopefully, humbly, under all changes and chances of this mortal fallen state, assured that while we continue thus in the path of duty, we cannot fail to please Him, or to be working out the true end of our being. We need to work on even if we fail, to make fresh endeavours, not knowing what means GOD may bless ; hope on even “against hope.” It is not by brooding over disappointment, or questioning GOD’S mercy, or doubting of His providence, nor in allowing sceptical thoughts or perplexities, that we can hope to succeed, or find peace ; but in singleness of heart, fearing GOD, loving man, in patient forbearance, in self-restraint and self-sacrifice, holding steadily on to the path of duty in the certainty of our vocation, where GOD has placed us, where one’s duty lies, though there may be times of fear, of despon-

dency, of suffering, and often heaviness and weariness of spirit.

Observe, secondly, how GOD honours earnestness and singleness of heart, though there may be lack of steadfast faith, or yielding to desponding fears. With all the defects and infirmities that marred Elijah's character, there was in him true zeal, true devotion, an entire surrender of himself, a singleheartedness, with one only aim in life, and GOD accepted him, though He reprov'd him for his failings. GOD reprov'd him for imperfect knowledge of Himself, for want of trust, for lack of patience, for despair of the salvation of others, for judging hastily of the course of Divine providence. But He honoured his zeal, his pure intention, his singleness of heart. He would lead him on to higher knowledge. He would perfect the work He had begun. He would bear with his imperfections, and build up higher graces, and a purer knowledge of Himself, on the foundations which He had laid ; for there was in Elijah an entire surrender of himself to a high vocation, an earnest desire for the truth and honour of GOD, and love for the souls of men. GOD sought only to temper his zeal with a purer faith, and a clearer knowledge, a more perfect union with His own will in long-suffering love. GOD suffers the past failures to be forgotten. He remem-

bereth them no more, and sends His servant forth with a higher illumination and a humbler spirit, and a sure promise of fulfilling His word and accomplishing His ministry of saving grace.

So may GOD bless each one of us, pardoning our infirmities and negligences, and lead us on to a greater perfection in the state of life whereunto He hath called us.

## V.

### The Revival.

*"And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus ; and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria ; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel ; and Elisha the son of Shaphat, of Abelmeholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room."*—1 Kings xix. 15.

**L**AST Sunday we saw Elijah bowed down in repentance before GOD on Mount Horeb, reproved for his loss of faith, and his despondency, because he fled from his path of duty when it involved suffering.

Such was the attitude in which we found that great man, when we last contemplated him. We are now to see him in his after course, reinvigorated, enlightened, strengthened in his faith. We have seen how, after his chastening, he was sent forth again by GOD, to return to the work, which he had abandoned, to take up again the mission restored to him, again to have the opportunity of ministering according to his



Master's will. We have now therefore to contemplate Elijah, as a changed man, going forth in a different spirit, with zeal tempered by better knowledge ; his understanding of the ways and workings of GOD clearer, and truer ; his hope of what might be effected among those to whom he was sent, renewed, and with a tenderer love, with greater forbearance and sympathy towards others. Such was the spirit in which Elijah returned to the path of duty, and from this time a special blessing rested on his work. Before, we saw him giving up all hope of success in the struggle with wickedness ; now, on the contrary, he wins many to repentance and to GOD'S service.

Elijah was one who could exert influence in different directions. Ordinarily some men can train up souls in saintly ways ; others have power to turn sinners from unrighteousness. Few have excelled in both spheres of influence. But Elijah had power to train saints to succeed him in his ministry, and also to convert hardened idolaters. Instances of his power are shown, of the one kind in the case of Elisha, of the other in that of Ahab.

After leaving Mount Horeb, fresh from his communion with Almighty GOD, we see him winning Elisha ; it was like an Andrew finding his brother Simon. "Elisha the son of Shaphat was ploughing

with twelve yoke of oxen, before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow thee."<sup>1</sup>

It was an instance of the influence that a man of earnest faith has upon the hearts of others, quickening their dormant zeal by their own ardour, an influence which works not so much by teaching or example, as by a sympathy through which in some mysterious way one soul acts upon another soul, as fire catches fire. Thus zeal kindles zeal, love generates love, GOD'S grace awakening higher thoughts and feelings, through which He forms His instruments for His own purposes. Innumerable instances show what one man whose mind is set on GOD'S service with an undivided affection can do for others,—one of earnest purpose and pure intention, and singleness of heart with an inner sense of GOD'S presence, and consciousness of His upholding and guiding power. It is the prophet's mantle falling on Elisha, as he followed the yoke of oxen. GOD has knit man to man in a wonderful communion. History is full of the instances in which it is shown what individual men can

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xix. 19, 20.

do in moving multitudes, in stirring, in reforming nations. It is in this way by individual influence, that GOD'S kingdom has grown, and spread in all ages. It was so during our LORD'S opening ministry. The foundations of His kingdom were thus laid, one calling another, brother winning brother, each saying to the other, "We have found the Messiah, which is called CHRIST," the grace of GOD working through the links of personal influence, by which in the bond of a common humanity we are linked together.

The influence of Elijah on Elisha is but one instance of an universal truth. His first apparent rejection of him was but a quickening of the awakened desire. Elijah had said unto him, "Go back again; for what have I done to thee?" But Elisha was only going back for a while, to complete his purpose of self-sacrifice. "He returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat." It was as S. Matthew made a feast in thankfulness for his divine call.<sup>1</sup> Quickly in all self-surrender and grateful devotion Elisha followed his revered master. "Then he arose and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him." He be-

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. ix. 9, 10.

came Elijah's successor, trained under him for the prophetic office, and this, Elisha's consecration to the life-long service of GOD, was the first fruit of Elijah's renewed faithfulness, and more perfect conformity with the mind of GOD.

The other instance of Elijah's influence was shown in the case of the haughty and hardened Ahab. Think of the scene in Naboth's vineyard. Recall to your minds how Ahab had coveted his neighbour's vineyard.<sup>1</sup> It was not merely extreme covetousness. It was a direct disregard of GOD's judgments, for in Israel a man's inheritance was secured to him, as part of the order which GOD, as the King of Israel, had determined for His people.

It was His will that each family should dwell in the inheritance of their fathers. Ahab therefore, at the instigation of Jezebel, was sinning with a high hand both against man and against GOD. You will remember how the sin of covetousness worked in his soul—how he lay down on his couch, and turned away his face and would eat no bread; then how Jezebel had the strong resolve to gain at all cost what her husband desired to possess—how to compass her end Naboth was falsely accused of blasphemy, how, as though it had been by a righteous judgment, he

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xxi. 2—4.

was stoned to death, and how she then in triumphant scorn bid Ahab go down and take possession, and how he went at her bidding, and took possession, and on his return one met him on his path.

And who was this? Was it the ghost of the murdered Naboth? No. It was the Avenger, the Prophet of GOD, come to tell him of the doom of GOD. And seeing Elijah, his guilt fresh on his soul, though in the moment of success, he cowered before him; he cried, "Hast thou found me, O my enemy?" feeling what every guilty man must feel, sooner or later, the overwhelming power of remorse and terror, from which he could not escape. And Elijah spoke; "I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD."

It was an instance of the mysterious force of truth against falsehood, of righteousness against unrighteousness, of the fact that the guilty soul sinks helpless before any brave man who can stand up in the Name of GOD to reprove the sinner. If any man be guilty of a base act, if any one has wronged his neighbour, or transgressed knowingly a plain commandment of GOD,—let but a child meet him in his path and bear some simple witness for truth and purity, how surely does conscience arise to strike terror into the soul—how surely does the sinner be-

come, to use the strong figurative language of Scripture, as "a shaken leaf,"<sup>1</sup> trembling at the witness for GOD, however silent and secret. These instances of the misery and terror of guilty souls, are written, no doubt, in the Scriptures to tell us of the future which, if not experienced in this world, surely awaits the guilty in the invisible world. "Be sure your sin will find you out." A more awful Presence will then meet the soul, even the very "Judge of all the earth," and it may be, alas, an irrevocable judgment, when the day of repentance is past, and the day of grace closed. Blessed are they who in this present time, are by any means stirred to repentance, the proud heart subdued, the careless heart cowed with fear. Thank GOD that in this instance of Ahab we see how the darkest sinner, the most haughty and arrogant, may be bowed down, may tremble at the word of reproof, may, while the abundant grace of GOD is yet within his reach, know the redeeming, quickening power of the HOLY SPIRIT, moving his soul to "godly sorrow," and fresh hope.

Ahab had in the pride of power gone on for long years, as it seemed, above the reach of truth or of censure, and at last the power of GOD'S message reaches him. "It came to pass, when Ahab heard those

<sup>1</sup> Levit. xxvi. 36.

words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me ?”<sup>1</sup>

And now let us bear in mind that the very same voice of the Living GOD, which drew Elisha to a noble service of life-long devotion, and which softened the hardness of Ahab’s heart, the voice which has such powers of conversion, for the fulfilment of His different purposes, meeting each soul according to its needs, working on every man, secretly, as He will—this same voice speaks still as of old, and through one means or another reaches us, reaches one after this manner, another after that manner, and if one call fail, there will succeed another, and ever with the same power and capability of abounding grace, openly it may be, or perhaps secretly, unknown to others, within one’s own bosom.

Let us bear in mind, that now, to us, with greater responsibility than of old, because with a clearer knowledge of the mind of GOD, with greater experience, with the long history of GOD’S dealings spread out before us, such calls, such warnings come with all the greater force. We know CHRIST, and His love,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xxi. 27—29.

we have the gift of His Spirit, and we shall be the more guilty, if we listen not to the call ; if we repent not when the voice of reproof reaches us, if we follow Him not, as He makes known to us the calling whenever we are called, that we may learn to fulfil our duty in the circumstances which He has willed for us.

May He grant us of His mercy, if we have in anything sinned against the LORD, the grace of true repentance, that we may walk humbly before Him. May He lead us on from grace to grace, that we may know all His will, and consecrate ourselves to His service, with Elisha's willing ear, and fervent steadfastness of devout obedience, and thus fulfil in our measure our appointed course to the glory of His great Name.



## VI.

### The Law and the Gospel.

*“And when the disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”—S. Luke ix. 54—56.*

**I**N considering the incident in the life of Elijah which follows the events on which we have been dwelling, and contrasting it with what is recorded of our LORD and His Apostles in the passage selected in the text, the difference between the Mosaic law and the Gospel must be carefully borne in mind.

The object of the law or covenant under which Elijah lived and worked, was to show in a strong marked manner the judgments of GOD upon sin, and to restrain man from sinning carelessly. It impressed on men’s minds the fear of the judgments which would follow any evil doings. The object of the Gospel is to open a way for repentance, and for the

sinner's return to GOD, providing the means of forgiveness and reconciliation. The Law is the exhibition of Divine justice, the Gospel is the exhibition of Divine mercy. These different objects explain the different modes of dealing of which we read under the two covenants.

It is not that the Law and the Gospel, the Old and the New Covenants, are contrary the one to the other. They do in truth combine together to show the whole mind of GOD towards man. The one prepares the way for the other, and is at the same time completed by the other, as our LORD said, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil the law."<sup>1</sup> The Law contains the promise of the Gospel, and teaches it in a hidden way by types and prophecies. The Gospel, on the other hand, confirms the Law. For the judgments of the Law must continue in force as long as sin continues, only the Gospel shows how these judgments upon sin may be removed, or overruled for good to them that believe, and live in its promises of Divine love.

The reason why the Gospel could not be revealed before "the fulness of time came," is because it depended on the Passion and Sacrifice of our LORD JESUS CHRIST—not until the assurance of salvation

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. v. 17.

could be given through that meritorious sacrifice was the way of mercy open. Only when the Passion was accomplished, and the precious blood poured out and sprinkled, could the love of GOD be fully revealed, or His mercy and pity fully set forth. His tender sympathy waited for that Sacrifice. Before He could only speak in parables; His attributes of mercy were under a veil, but were seen by the faithful, as the promise of the future, whenever the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT illuminated the lowly and contrite heart, showing by faith "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,"<sup>1</sup> that is to say, the Lamb, the benefit of Whose sacrifice extended back to the beginning of time for all who turned to Him in true repentance.

As there was this great difference between the two Dispensations, so likewise there was a difference in the mind and spirit of those who lived and ministered under the one or the other. There was a great difference not only in their standard of holiness, and their general view of things, but also in their manner of dealing with sinners, in the spirit in which they worked and ministered. During the Old Covenant there was, as we have seen, an under-current of mercy, "a still small voice," speaking to those who

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xiii. 8.

could understand, but which could not come out more prominently to the general apprehension of the world. The truth proclaimed and urged most earnestly was the awfulness and severity of GOD'S judgments upon wickedness and unbelief. Under the Gospel, on the other hand, while the mercy of GOD is the predominating idea, and hope for the sinner ever tenderly pressed on his heart, there is still the under-current of judgment kept in reserve, and the possibility of utter condemnation declared, if the mercy of GOD is set at nought, and the offers and promises of Divine love finally rejected.

If these differences are kept in mind, we may clearly understand what caused the difference between the two events which we are considering, and which I desire to contrast with one another—the one occurring in the life of Elijah, the other occurring in the life of the Divine Master, our Incarnate LORD.

In the text, two of the Apostles, thinking that the spirit of Elijah was still to mark the new covenant, refer to what Elijah did, and which is recorded in the first chapter of the Second Book of Kings.

Let us first consider what is there told us of Elijah. He had recovered from his despondency, and had returned to the path of duty and the fulfilment of his mission. He had been restored through penitence. He

had seen a clearer vision of GOD and of His dealings with sinful man, and was strengthened with renewed courage. Though still in danger, his life threatened, he was again at work among the idolaters of Israel, and he never failed again. His heart never again gave way, and as he went to and fro through the midst of the land, he still continued to minister with a trust in GOD, and a devotedness of which the incident referred to is a signal and striking example.

At the time alluded to Ahab was dead, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. The young king inherited not the spirit of penitence and sorrow which softened the close of his father's life, but rather his previous hardness of heart and unbelief, and his enmity to the servants of GOD.

After awhile he became sick, and then he sought relief, not from the GOD of Israel, but from Baalzebub the god of Ekron, from an idol, not from the true GOD. He had sent his servants to inquire of Baalzebub if he should recover, and the messengers met Elijah in the way. He stood before them ; the same witness as of old, against idolatry, and the messengers of the king were stayed in their course. Elijah met them as he had before met Ahab. He declared to them their sin in seeking to learn of an idol, and told them that Ahaziah would never rise

from his bed, that he would surely die. The messengers returned to their master and told him how they had met the prophet, and how he had announced his death ; and the anger of the king broke forth.

He resolved to seek Elijah, as Ahab had before sought him, to put him to death,—and sent a company of soldiers, “a captain of fifty with his fifty.”<sup>1</sup>

On Mount Carmel, where Elijah was wont to retire for communion with GOD, they sought him. They thought to find him alone and undefended, meaning to seize him, and carry him away captive. They approached him with mockery, “Thou man of GOD, the king hath said unto thee, Come down.” The language betokens scorn. It was a type of the mockery which in the day of the Passion, on Mount Calvary, beset the Son of Man, and put Him to an open shame,—a type too of the mockery and scorn which has often been the trial of the faithful man of GOD, who would rise above the common feeling of those around him, and oppose himself to their unbelief. Unbelieving men will often seek by abuse or ridicule to crush the true witness of the Living GOD.

It was not merely that Elijah's life was sought, but the very existence of the true GOD was denied. It was on this account that Elijah put forth the power

<sup>1</sup> 2 Kings i. 9—16.

of his faith in prayer, as he had done before, appealing to GOD to bear witness to His truth by a miracle, and the answer quickly followed. There "came down fire from heaven, and consumed" the captain and his fifty.

The heart of the king was still hardened, and he sent again "another captain of fifty and his fifty;" and this time with yet greater scorn. The wording of the message was changed. "The king hath said, Come down quickly;" the word, quickly, is added, as if to say, You are helpless in our hands; yield to the power that claims instant obedience.

Again the prayer of faith entered the ear of GOD. His servant sought once more from heaven a witness of His truth; and again the fire "came down and consumed" the captain and his fifty.

You will remember how a third time the king sought to overmaster GOD in the person of His servant, and the third time he sent "a captain of fifty and his fifty."

And now the under-current of love and mercy, which, as already shown, steals out again and again even under the awful judgments of the old covenant, came out to view. The third captain of the fifty, stirred with fear at the fate which had befallen the other captains and their fifties, and struck with awe

in the presence of Elijah, knelt down before the servant of GOD, and besought him to spare him and his followers. And then "the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him, be not afraid of him. And he arose and went down with him unto the king." It was the promise of peace after the storm of the wrath of GOD on the sin of the rebellious king and his servants.

Observe now the difference which, as before said, marks the Gospel, and the Mosaic Law. The contrast appears in the action of Him of Whom Elijah testified, Who brought into the world the hope of peace, and the means of restoration for fallen man.

Our LORD was on His way to Jerusalem to accomplish His Passion, and, as He went, He willed to enter into one of the villages of the Samaritans, and sent His disciples to prepare His way. But the people rose up and forbad Him entrance. Then it was that the two Apostles, James and John, asked Him if they should call down fire from heaven, to avenge the injured dignity of their Master, as Elijah had done. And He said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Did He mean to condemn the action of His servant Elijah? Surely not. But He meant that a new dispensation had arisen, and consequently, a new mode of dealing with sinners, that through Him-



self, a new spirit was to manifest itself in the world. Our LORD had set His seal of approval on the faith of His servant Elijah, for he was true to the covenant under which he ministered, true for ever in the fact, that there are judgments which may fall at any time on the unrepentant and defiant, if the mercy of GOD is despised. But a new covenant had opened, and the Apostles had to learn that this covenant breathed a different spirit, and spoke of mercy ; that the Son of Man is "come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."<sup>1</sup>

Let us consider the lesson which is here taught us, and it is a lesson which we have specially to lay to heart, when we are now again about to commemorate the Passion of our Blessed Master. There are two practical applications of it, to which I would direct your minds. First of all, we need to cherish a spirit of forgiveness for any injury and unkindness. In old times, this week of the Passion was called "the truce of GOD." The truce of GOD was proclaimed throughout Christendom, so that while the Redeemer of mankind was, as it were, "crucified afresh" before their eyes, peace should reign among all Christian people.

Such a spirit should still breathe everywhere.

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke ix. 56.

Every man in his own private sphere should put away the remains of any quarrel, or discord, or enmity or ill-will, that peace may reign among all who have the same hope in CHRIST.

We ought not to desire that fire should come down from heaven to avenge insulted honour ; we ought not to pray that GOD would put forth His power to injure, to prove that oneself is right, and the other wrong ; nor that GOD should intervene for one's own justification, to make good one's own cause against an opponent. We cannot be possessed by such a spirit if we are His, Who turned away from the village of the Samaritans because it would not receive His messengers, for He, the Divine Master, "being reviled, reviled not again, but committed Himself to Him Who judgeth righteously."<sup>1</sup>

A spirit of forgiveness, of reconciliation ; the banishing from the heart, as far as possible, the very remembrance of anything, any word, or act, that keeps up any ill-feeling between oneself and others, is the only true fruit of the mind of CHRIST, is indeed a necessary preliminary, a necessary preparation, if we hope to enter with any profit to our souls into the contemplation of the Passion.

Again, there is another necessity which presses

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. Pet. ii. 23.

upon us,—another important lesson of an outward kind, which would promote a true Christian spirit. It is a common saying, “A soft answer turneth away wrath.” It is a power difficult to learn, difficult always to maintain ; but it is a power which we may obtain by studying the mind of CHRIST, by self-discipline nourished by prayer, and formed in us by the good Spirit of GOD. It is taught us by our LORD’S example in His way of dealing, as shown in such a case as this. The village of the Samaritans had refused to receive Him, He passes calmly on to another village. It was the act of one who would avoid strife, who is willing to bear with opposition and rebuke rather than arouse passion, or resent an injury. It is the grace of meekness. It was the act of Him Who would not “bruise the broken reed, nor quench the smoking flax ;”<sup>1</sup> “Who would have all men to be saved ;”<sup>2</sup> and for this end would give time and opportunity of repentance. And we in the common ways of daily life have a constant call to live in the same spirit, and imitate His example. We know by painful experience how one angry word gives rise to another, and provokes the resentful spirit, even as fire spreads, catching instantly any inflammable material ; how a resolution to avoid everything that

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xlii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

might provoke a conflict with another,—a resolution perhaps just made in prayer, even perhaps at the Altar,—may suddenly be broken ; how frail we are to meet even the slightest provocation, or keep calm under any excitement. Unless we strive to check ourselves at the very beginning, how rapid is the movement of impatience,—how quick the self-asserting word ; how almost impossible, when once the fire is kindled, to place the rein on passion, and deny oneself the momentary gratification of the irritated spirit. Where is our hope of safety and of peace, except we keep close to our LORD, and constantly ask Him to help us, and use great watchfulness ? Otherwise while thinking that we stand, we are really ever ready to fall.

It is by degrees we gain this power, by learning to bear gently discourtesies, provocations, neglect, rudenesses, such as may meet us continuously in our daily path, and, it may be, quite unintentionally. By little and little strength grows, and we may become more and more like to Him Who bid us learn of Him specially in this, that He came among us, and lived among us, as One “meek and lowly of heart.”<sup>1</sup>

A word of explanation may be needed here. There are times when we may most lawfully defend

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xi. 29.

ourselves, when one may assert the truth, or be forced to maintain one's honour, or the dignity of one's state or office. It may be even that through us GOD may will to assert His honour and truth. Each one must judge for himself when and where there is a call for the exercise of such a spirit. But to be able to do this without sin, there needs the self-control, and self-denial, which can only be learnt at the feet of CHRIST. And His words are surely not spoken without cause when He said, "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also ; and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also : and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."<sup>1</sup>

It requires indeed divine wisdom and searching discipline of heart to reconcile what is due to others with what may be due to ourselves, or to GOD'S honour, but we should never forget the principle that breathes in the promise, "Blessed are the meek," or the Psalmist's assurance "that the meek-spirited shall possess the earth, and be refreshed in the multitude of peace."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. v. 39—41.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxxvii. 11.

## VII.

### The Triumph.

*“ And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”—2 Kings ii. 11.*

THE closing scene of Elijah's history I have reserved till this season,<sup>1</sup> that it might be considered in connection with that great event, which it typified, and which we are now commemorating.

It was in a wonderful and glorious way that the great prophet of Israel, after his long labours passed from earth to heaven. Let me remind you briefly of the circumstances. Having been told by GOD that he was to be “received up into heaven,” he took his last journey, first to Gilgal, then passing on to Bethel, and then to Jericho. From thence he went to the borders of the Jordan, and there he saw the waters

<sup>1</sup> Preached on the Sunday after the Ascension of our LORD.

stayed back in their course, and divided, leaving a path between, that he might pass over.

Some intimation of what was about to happen had been revealed to Elisha, his attendant. It had also become known to "the sons of the prophets," and they, as well as Elijah, had urged Elisha to tarry on his way,—*they* evidently fearing what the effects of the awful manifestation might be to their future master, *he*, it may be supposed, in his deep humility, shrinking from his promised exaltation being seen by any human witness. But the servant would still cling to his master ; "As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee."

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

One cannot by any attempt at description add to the grandeur of this wonderful event. But we may be permitted to ask, *why* did this mysterious ascension of Elijah take place? why did he pass thus beyond death, but not through death, within the sight of living witnesses ;—for the sons of the prophets stood to gaze afar off, and Elisha was close by his master's side?

We can hardly doubt that the reason for this mi-

raculous passage of the servant of the most high GOD to his future glory, was to show to that generation, in a day of widespread unbelief, and of sore trial for the faithful, what the end of this state of probation for GOD'S faithful people would be—a substantial assurance of a future state and of a glory inconceivable, destined for the elect people of GOD.

At this time the mass of the Israelites, the chosen people, intended to be the teachers of the world in after ages, to whom alone were committed "the oracles of GOD," had fallen away, and had become worshippers of Baal and Ashtarothe, the idols which Ahab, and Jezebel the heathen queen, had substituted for the worship of the true GOD. Against this dreadful apostasy there had arisen a religious revival, mainly through the instrumentality of Elijah, to be carried on after him by the companies of the prophets trained in the schools which he had founded.

We can hardly doubt that it was to encourage those who were thus labouring in this great work, to show the glory that awaited the faithful, after their trials on earth, that this wondrous sight was shown to their wondering eyes. It was as much as to say ; See what is before you, if you persevere ; see the recompense of the righteous ; see the assured future



of the faithful. Believe in the nearness of GOD's Presence, of the working of His Almighty power, of the realities of another and a higher world for man. It seemed an adequate cause for such a miraculous intervention in the course of the ordinary laws of nature, as in the days of the antediluvian patriarchs, when Enoch was taken up, not seeing death,<sup>1</sup> and again in later ages, before the Mosaic covenant, when Isaac was given back to his father's arms, as one in a figure raised unlooked for from the dead.<sup>2</sup>

These miraculous interventions of GOD were alike types of the mystery which the Church to-day commemorates, the Ascension of our LORD. But there are marked differences between His Ascension and that of Elijah. Our LORD needed not any power from without to exalt Him to heaven, He was not borne up by the chariots or horses of fire, or any angelic agency. He ascended through the inherent power of His own Godhead. He ascended moreover not merely to take His place as Elijah only could among the choirs of the Blessed. He went up to the right hand of the FATHER as One coequal with the FATHER.

Let me recall to you very briefly what is told us of our LORD'S Ascension. Leaving Jerusalem where

<sup>1</sup> Gen. v. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xi. 19.

the body of disciples were assembled, and passing by Gethsemane, the scene, but a short time before, of His Agony in the days of His humiliation, and ascending from thence up the slope of the Mount of Olives, He came to Bethany, and there, after the few last words, "while they beheld," and as He lifted up His hands in blessing them, He rose before their eyes, passing upward till "a cloud received Him out of their sight,"—a cloud, or as we may surely believe the word to mean, a host of angels accompanying Him, as a train of glory, into the central sanctuary of the highest heavens, even to the Throne of GOD the FATHER.

We can surely understand why it was, that the Ascension should be seen by mortal eyes, as the typical ascent of Elijah had been. It was doubtless to show that He Who had condescended to pass through the shame and bitterness of a most humiliating death, was not subject to death, but had triumphed over death through the very mystery of His humiliation, and this not for Himself, but for others ; that He was in His proper nature above all earthly necessities,—that He Who had been despised on earth, was honoured in heaven,—that the Crucified One was more than man, that He was really GOD to be glorified and worshipped for evermore.

On this account the Ascension is the most blessed of all Festivals. It has a peculiar sense of triumph and a peculiar joy. In it we see the closing of an earthly course of sorrow and shame, of utmost distress and humiliation. And we may surely carry on our view to the consequences of this event to the world at large, for in our LORD'S exaltation we see the restoration of mankind. We see the disorders of this present fallen state all remedied, the consequences of sin, and sin itself done away; righteousness acknowledged; truth crowned; faithfulness receiving its due recompense; "wisdom justified of her children;" the Divinity which had been hidden in a low estate, shining forth in its proper glory before mortal eyes. As men witnessed the shame and the agony, so now they witness His glory, a glory hereafter to be communicated to all who are His, as it was first manifested in Himself, the LORD of glory. There is thus in this Festival a restfulness, a thankfulness, a rejoicing unspeakable, beyond that of all others, while without it all other festivals would be incomplete.

With regard to ourselves, who are in CHRIST, this Festival is most deeply encouraging as to our present state. For, first, it gives the most hopeful view of the possibilities of perfection in our nature, in the very

substance of our nature, its great possibilities of growth onward, its future perfected development. There are those who think that man's nature is hopelessly bad, that having inherited a nature prone to evil, man is subject of necessity to doing evil, that nothing lies before him in life, but to go on yielding to passions, infirmities, and temptations. And men speak lightly, and even jestingly, of some of the basest sins, such as one would not like to name, as being what they call natural to man.

But there is this remarkable fact with regard to Christianity, which distinguishes it from every other religion ever known on earth, that while it shows us our sins, as no other religion has done, and leads us to hate ourselves as we naturally are, yet, with this deep knowledge of the evil within, it sets before us the highest possible hope of what we may become ; it gives us a bright and glorious view of our future ; it shows us the grandeur of the destiny for which GOD has formed us ; and how this very bodily nature may be transformed, how it may be led upward, if we believe and follow JESUS, and try to tread in His steps, trusting to His power to save, and knowing that we are of the same flesh and blood which He took upon Himself, the very same nature that He redeemed, not for Himself, but for us, that we too like Himself

may become pure, holy, and heavenly. Thus as we take our path through life we may ever be mounting upwards; indeed our spiritual life, even our eternal life, has already begun,—and the sure end of a faithful life is the Heaven into which our LORD has passed. The power to live such a life even now in this our time of probation is indeed given to us, if we will live to Him Who gives it, and persevere in the exercise of it. Through watchfulness and prayer, and the grace of Sacraments, power is given to become of one purity of flesh and spirit with our LORD Himself, a fitness to pass whither He has gone before.

Thus this Festival gives to every one who will receive the true Gospel life, a sanguine encouraging view of his future life, of the power that may be developed in him, of the grace that may be received from Him Who, for us and for our children, hath won the victory.

Again, this Festival encourages us in another manner. It tells us of our future home in a real way such as nothing else can. In the account of our LORD'S Ascension we see the heavens open : we feel it to be more than a passing vision ; we feel it to be a palpable and material truth. He has gone as a Man, with a body and soul like ours, with the powers, tastes, wishes, aspirations, activity of mind and heart

and sense, and all the instincts of a Man. Must not the place to which He is gone be suited to the full development of the same nature in us also? For as He had from everlasting a Home in His ever-blessed Unity with the FATHER, so He entered, at His Ascension, into the possession of another home in His Manhood in the perfection of bliss suited to the creature, intending to share it with those who should follow Him. We know how many are tormented by a fear of death, of the parting of soul and body; the fear torments them, they cannot cast it off from their minds, their imagination is filled with it. But is it not a remedy for this fear to look at the light and glory beyond? Surely this has strengthened, and will again strengthen, many a feeble spirit, which shrinks from the momentary pang of death. As the soul becomes filled with the delights of the world which awaits it, the intervening Jordan gives way, its waters part on its approach, anticipating the endless bliss which opens before its enraptured sight. The prospect grows more and more clear to the eye of faith, as it illumines everything that looks so dark in this mortal life.

How many a sorrow, fear, disappointment, anxiety, has been relieved, how greatly has hard labour, painful trial, been cheered and brightened by this prospect.

The view of the endless bliss of that blessed home prepared for the faithful, furnished, provided with everything that is needed, for the enjoyment of every pure taste, and active power, with which GOD has gifted our nature, will then satisfy the soul. And signs of the coming glory may be seen even in this life, as the faithful grow to old age,—the eye will often brighten, the cheek be lighted up with the light of another world, and the heart be filled with joy, as it feels the nearness of the bliss on which faith has fed, and which hope has perpetually quickened. It is heaven already begun, the sacrifice of an offered life already accepted, the light of glory beginning to shine on the worn and weary, even in this life.

Thus grace may even here reveal its secrets to the faithful soul, as a sustaining power, a faint image of His Divine peace, even in the midst of His sufferings, “Who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 2.

# The History of Jonah.

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## I.

### The Flight from God.

*“Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before Me. But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”—Jonah i. 1—3.*

I PROPOSE, with GOD's blessing, during this Lent to set before you the main features of the history of the prophet Jonah. The text records the first incident in his life that is made known to us. But before dwelling upon it, it is necessary to explain how the dealings of GOD affected the nations bordering upon the land of Israel. Though the Israelites were the elect people, the mercy of GOD was continually extending itself beyond them. He would from time



to time send prophets and messengers to turn them from their idols, to reveal to them the knowledge of Himself, and bring them to repentance.

This history of Jonah is an instance. The event referred to occurred at the time when the Assyrians were at the height of their power.

To this people and to their capital city GOD sent His prophet, because their wickedness had become exceeding great, and He sought to turn them from it. But Jonah resisted the call of GOD, and refused to go.

The point we have first to consider is, *Why* he refused to go? We learn this from what Jonah himself afterwards confessed; it was because he thought GOD would spare the Ninevites after he, His prophet, had proclaimed their ruin, and he shrank from the supposed humiliation of appearing in their eyes a false prophet. He scrupled not to express this feeling openly when he remonstrated with Almighty GOD, as we shall see later on in his history, for we shall find that GOD'S merciful forbearance "displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry."<sup>1</sup>

He shrank from the sensitiveness of a proud nature, fearing the possible reproach of having to withdraw his words, though it might be the saving of thousands

<sup>1</sup> Jonah iv. 1.

from ruin. Under this influence he was unwilling to be the messenger of GOD.

Another reason has been suggested, but of this the Scriptural account conveys no intimation; namely, that he passionately loved his country, was eager for its security and exaltation, and therefore feared the uprising of this powerful nation on its borders, and their desire to avenge any injury done to them.

But let us dwell more especially on the remarkable expression used to describe Jonah's flight; he fled "unto Tarshish *from the presence of the Lord.*"

Is it possible that Jonah thought by a change of place to get beyond the reach of the Divine displeasure? This must seem wholly impossible, for he was of the Hebrew nation, and knew well that the LORD was the GOD of heaven and earth; and he must often have used the Psalm, "Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?"<sup>1</sup> But the words do not necessarily bear this meaning. The "Presence" of GOD might mean His Presence within the veil in His temple, and so imply here that he fled from the seat of the worship of GOD. But it may also mean, what is here far more probable, that he fled from "the service of GOD." For thus Elijah de-

<sup>1</sup> Ps. cxxxix. 6.

scribes his position, "As the LORD liveth before Whom I stand ;"<sup>1</sup> and again, more precisely the angel Gabriel, "I am Gabriel who stand in the presence of GOD."<sup>2</sup> The words may therefore and probably do mean, that Jonah meant to abandon his prophetic office ; that he left the proper sphere of his ministry ; that he was faithless to his vocation, and would cast off the responsibility of a high calling.

Let us dwell on this unfaithfulness, and see what lessons we may draw from it.

Are we not, each of us, like Jonah, called to stand in the Presence of GOD. He as a prophet ? I as a priest, each of you in your several offices, your individual vocations, each before GOD,—the master in his household, the mother with her children, the employer with his dependents, the merchant in his money transactions, the tradesman in his business, the mechanic, the labourer, the servants of the household,—each in his appointed work,—even the child at its task.

Is it not true that one and all are each in his or her appointed place in the Presence of GOD, to serve Him ? We are not made at random, nor set by chance at our posts of service. Our outward circumstances and our inward dispositions, which determine our separate destinies, are GOD'S own voice calling

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xvii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke i. 19.

to us and fixing the appointed place of each. We have each certain duties and responsibilities, as clear and definite as the prophet had when he heard the word of GOD, and was sent to carry his message to the people of Nineveh.

And as this is surely the case with us, so it is equally true that we too may flee from the Presence of GOD, as Jonah did ; we may go down to our Tarshish, give up our duties, abandon our vocation, and fall short of our responsibilities, whether in GOD's highest behests, or in the little details of daily life.

The time that ought to be given to prayer may be taken for amusement ; the time for active duty may be spent in idleness. Our calling may require effort and hardness, and we shrink from it. One may immerse himself in business, another in literature, or art ; one may spend time and money on the mere temporal accidents of life with over-eagerness, as if life wholly depended on these things, which yet may be lawful and necessary as a means of livelihood or for passing recreation, but which are not meant to absorb the whole man, or draw us away from our proper destiny, of standing and serving in the Presence of GOD.

Jonah is the image of every man, who knowing the command of GOD, gives up the path of duty, choosing in preference something more congenial to his

tastes and disposition, or some passing feeling, some desire or fear.

It was in Jonah's case unwillingness to bear a temporary reproach, because the mercy of GOD was greater than his own, or perhaps from a false idea of the ways of GOD.

The call of duty will constantly involve giving up some interest or pleasure. The honest pursuit of trade may involve some risk or loss. The truthful word may injure a man in another's favour. Every real crisis of life needs trust, and every call requires effort. The confession of a fault brings with it humiliation and shame. We are all of us passing through such trials. The love of ease and pleasure, the wish to spare ourselves, to sip the delights of life by the way, is the bane of many a man. He sees before him a dull and uninteresting course, or a too self-denying prospect, not realising, or not appreciating, the joy of the pure in heart—of faithful dutifulness in the sight of GOD. The sacrifice is now, as it was to Jonah, "a hard saying." It is as it was to the young man in the Gospel history, who "had great possessions," who when told "to sell all that he had and give to the poor," and then come and follow CHRIST, shrank from the sacrifice and "went away sorrowful."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xix. 22.

And so it may be at any time in the case of some trial, or sorrow, or loss, some trouble that one meets in the path of daily life, which tries the soul and tests its faithfulness. It may drive one back from going on cheerfully where GOD leads, as we ought to do, not looking to the future, assured that GOD knows best, and that we shall find His promise true.

There are many different causes that induce men to "flee unto Tarshish from the Presence of the LORD." But in every case alike it is true that, "Not every one that saith unto Me, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of My FATHER."<sup>1</sup> To those who fail, and thus turn away from GOD, it will be an awful word to hear from the lips of JESUS, "I never knew you."

GOD grant that it may not be so with us. Or if it ever be so, may it be with us as it was with Jonah, whom we shall see brought back from his flight to the path of duty, and strengthened to arise, and return to the fulfilment of his great vocation, becoming afterwards, through much trouble and affliction, a true witness both of the mercy and justice of the Living GOD.

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. vii. 21.

## II.

### The Pursuit of God.

*"So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."—Jonah i. 6.*

**J**ONAH is the one instance of a Prophet who, having wholly fallen from his duty, was by the grace of GOD brought back, and restored to His service, in this resembling S. Peter, the one Apostle who in like manner was recalled from his very grievous fall.

On Sunday last we dwelt upon the part of Jonah's history, when, having been sent with a message to Nineveh to warn it of its possible destruction, he refused to carry the message of GOD from fear of the reproach and contempt that might follow, if GOD on their repentance spared them, and withheld the punishment which he was to predict; and we saw how in order, as he thought, to escape the risk, he

fled from the Presence of GOD, that is, from ministering before GOD as he had been wont to do.

To-day we have to consider the first stage of Jonah's repentance, and the means employed to bring it about. It is one effect of the mercy of GOD, to turn the troubles that beset us into a means of influencing us for our good. It may be a sudden accident, possibly a troubled dream, or a loss, or some great sorrow; such things have again and again been the means of bringing a man's sins to his remembrance, and leading his heart back to GOD. It is not to be supposed that GOD sends sorrow, as what He wills or prefers. Scripture calls it "His strange work,"<sup>1</sup> but He overrules the troubles to which we are subjected, as a means of restoring us to Him, that we may see in Him a desire to bless us, even in the midst of the distress which we have brought on ourselves.

It was so with Jonah; a tempest came and struck the vessel in which the Prophet slept. It was a miraculous ordering. "The LORD sent out a great wind into the sea." He willed the tempest. He valued the life of the soul beyond the life of the body, and sought to reach the fallen Prophet's heart through the terrors the tempest would awaken.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxviii. 21.



Again, men are moved often in unexpected ways, acted upon by persons who are not in the least aware of the effect of their interference in their case. A chance word has changed the course of many a man's life; even a child's words have often moved the soul of a strong man. There are times when out of the mouths of even bad men there may come words which GOD may use to bring home to the soul truths of the deepest moment to their eternal interest.

Jonah was at this crisis of his history among heathen men. The ship was manned by a heathen crew. Yet the mariners had some knowledge of the true GOD, for Israel acted as a leaven to the surrounding nations. Though the Mosaic Revelation was primarily given to the children of Israel only, it became, as it was intended to be, a channel through which there flowed out to the heathen around them portions of divine truth.

The words of my text were the utterance of the sailors in the Prophet's ear. He was asleep, while they were in prayer. Bowed down, it may be, by fatigue, he slept while they were turning to GOD in utmost terror. They saw the sleeping Prophet, and cried to him, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy GOD." These words must surely have

thrilled through the Prophet's soul. He saw around him heathen men, such as those he had been sent to save, giving him an example of faith in GOD in their time of distress. That he should have been called upon to pray by those whom GOD had sent him to teach, must have struck with remorse his agonised and anxious soul.

Again, it is remarkable that these heathen were aware of the great truth, that sin has its consequences of a righteous doom ; that in the trials that beset mankind there is some secret purpose at work ; that suffering follows evil done against GOD ; that there is just cause to fear lest He avenge His injured honour by providential judgments.

They had a feeling that there was some cause for this tempest ; that GOD was pursuing some one among themselves, in the crew or among the passengers ; and in this conviction they had cast lots,—it might be out of a mere spirit of superstitious divination, but the “lot is cast into the lap,”<sup>1</sup> and GOD may direct it as He wills.

As it happened the lot fell upon Jonah. And there arose the anxious questioning which, as the astonished sailors spoke to him, must have penetrated the Prophet's soul. “Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xvi. 33.

this evil is upon us ; what is thine occupation, and whence comest thou ? what is thy country, and of what people art thou ?”

His whole life must have risen up before his inner sight in a moment, and there evidently began to work within him the deep remorse of which we shall hear more as we pursue his history.

Let me only suggest a few thoughts, which seem naturally to arise, from what has been briefly narrated.

We trace up to the primal sin, the sin of our first parents, all that has come upon man in the way of suffering,—labour, weariness, pains of child-bearing, sorrow, death. All the burdens of humanity were the consequences of the original sin. Man, cast out of Paradise, fell under a harder taskmaster, and under greater trials than the law of obedience had involved. He found it harder to bear the consequences of leaving the Presence of GOD, than to obey the law laid upon him by his Creator. The prodigal tried to enjoy himself, to “eat, drink, and be merry,” but in vain ; he came at last to envy the herd of swine, and would fain have “filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat.”<sup>1</sup>

Again and again it has been shown how those who

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xv. 16.

have been brought up in holy homes, like Jonah, and like him having left the Presence and service of GOD, have fallen into the raging tempest. Many such, who have thought GOD'S service hard, and fancied that the world presented a happier prospect, have lived to find disappointment and trial, friends becoming enemies, difficulties and dismay everywhere; and have acknowledged sin to be a harder service, and the devil a harder taskmaster than Him Whom they refused to look on, as their FATHER and their Redeemer.

Think in your own case, how, if ever you have rejected and despised GOD'S authority, or the warnings of truth, and done what was pleasing to yourselves, how often you have had cause for regret and sorrow,—how instead of fruit you have gathered ashes.

It is happy for us, if at such times, when slumbering in despondency, or fear, or shame, a voice arouses us, "Awake, O sleeper, call upon thy GOD." Shall a son keep away for ever from a father he has once known? Shall a servant refuse to trust a master he has once loved? Such is the meaning of the call to Jonah. Is it not the same to us? Tried we may have been, and wanting in faith, and disobedient, but we know He Who rules all is good. We know

He has loved us in our lost estate, so as to send His SON to die for us.

Can we doubt the secret love even in the dark trial working for good? For after all it is "*thy* GOD,"—Him Whom we know to be our own. Blessed are those who suffering under trial can thus look through it, and beyond it, and see the Hand that guides all, Who "stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind,"<sup>1</sup> Who will not suffer "the sparrow to fall to the ground"<sup>2</sup> without Him, Whose Fatherly heart still ever broods over His lost children.

Blessed are they who see, and recognising the truth, turn to Him Who stilleth the stormy seas, and speaks "Peace." Blessed above all, are they who rising beyond the trial, learn to trust and to rest in GOD alone, casting themselves wholly on His mercy.

"Arise, and call upon thy GOD." Whatever may have been our state, whether unfaithful or sluggish, however doubtful we be as to the meaning of the dark shadows of trial, surely the daily providences around us are enough to teach us, the daily warnings enough to arouse us, even as the voices of the heathen awoke Jonah,—asleep and heedless of the consequences of his sin, even amid the terrors of death.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xxvii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. x. 29.

### III.

#### The Return to God.

*“And Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish’s belly.”—*  
Jonah ii. 1.

**M**Y object in setting before you the history of Jonah is to show the nature of his sin, the truth of his penitence, and the way in which he was restored to GOD’S favour. It is not therefore within my purpose to dwell on the wonderful miracle which GOD employed as an instrument in His dealing with His servant, how He prepared and guided through the vast depth the great fish that was “to swallow up Jonah,” or how the fish bore him to the shore, and then cast the Prophet up upon the dry land. Enough for us to consider, that it was the chosen type of a far greater mystery, namely, how the SON of GOD entered into the bowels of the earth, and rose up again in His glorious Resurrection. Enough that He Who is the Truth Itself declared the truth

**M**

of this miracle, when He said, "There shall no sign be given to this generation but the sign of the Prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."<sup>1</sup>

Let us turn our thoughts to the change which was thus worked in Jonah's soul. Bear in mind what was the nature of his sin. It was not that he was separated from GOD, but that he had abandoned his duty, had shrunk from his mission, had thought more of his own relief from trial than of GOD'S will. That his soul was never separated inwardly from GOD, that faith still breathed beneath the false ideas which possessed him for a time, is shown by his answer to the anxious sailors, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD GOD of Heaven and earth."

Last Sunday we saw how Jonah was awakened from his sleep, and how in the casting of lots the lot falling on himself, and thus pointing him out as the transgressor, brought home to his soul a keen sense of his unfaithfulness.

When some wrong has been done which we have not the courage to confess, and the truth is discovered, fixing the charge on oneself personally, we

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xii. 39, 40; xvi. 4.

know what a terrible shock and deep inward sense of self-reproach is felt. When the Babylonish garment was taken from the spoil of Jericho, and no man owned the sacrilege, the lot was cast, and then the tribe was taken, and then the family, and then the individual man who had done the deed,—how keenly must the guilt have come home to the sinner's soul. So, again, when Nathan came to David, and said to him, "Thou art the man," how did the sinner tremble. So now, as the lot fell on Jonah, and, before the sailors, before the heathen, the truth appeared that the Prophet of GOD was the man who had brought on them the distress and terror of the storm, his awakened consciousness worked in him, and began to form that broken and contrite spirit which GOD will not despise.

When the sailors asked Jonah what was to be done, he, no doubt, taught of GOD, said, "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea ; so shall the sea be calm unto you, for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

What do his words prove ? Not only Jonah's personal sense of guilt, but his complete surrender of himself to GOD, whether to live or to die. "If I die," he seems to say, "it is my just doom ; if I live, it is the pure undeserved mercy of GOD."



It was the most perfect reparation we can conceive. As before he would not surrender his own will, and his own judgment, notwithstanding the command of GOD ; so now he would give up himself wholly for whatever GOD might will as his deserved punishment.

The sailors cast him into the sea. But then a yet deeper sense of penitence awoke within Jonah, and a yet stronger expression of profound sorrow and unquestioning child-like faith broke forth from him. We cannot read the words of the prayer which "Jonah prayed unto the LORD his GOD out of the whale's belly," out of what he calls "the depth of hell," without being greatly moved. "I am cast out of Thy sight, yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple." "I went down to the bottom of the mountains ; the earth with her bars was about me for ever : yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my GOD. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." He was in the darkness, his head wrapped about with the weeds of the deep sea, all the billows and the waves passing over him, yet then in his dark lonely prison-house, not knowing what the next mo-

ment might bring forth, he yet cried to GOD a prayer of thanksgiving, "I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving. I will pay that I have vowed ;" and this too with restful trust possessed by the one thought, "Salvation is of the LORD."

Jonah saw, by faith, life restored, he saw divine mercy working itself out, in the midst of the deep darkness, and he acknowledged GOD as his FATHER, his Protector, his eternal hope even then in the midst of his awful doom.

We may draw two lessons from this history.

First we see here an act of the purest faith.

There is a faith of a soft and easy kind, when everything goes smooth, and we have no anxiety, no fear, or distress darkening the path of life. How glibly then do people speak of having their hope in GOD. But let the ground shake beneath their feet, and all become dark, and the stars go out, where is then their faith? It was a faith bred of the sunshine and the warmth. It really was but sight, and not faith.

There is another kind of faith, which produces resignation, patience, willingness to endure, and be brave, and ever willing to suffer. But yet it may not be faith that cheers the soul, not a "rejoicing in the LORD," not the triumph of the trustful soul.

The real saving faith that grace works, the "substance of things hoped for," the "evidence of things not seen," is when the soul sees GOD working in the storm and tempest, and reads the handwriting on the wall, speaking even in the midst of death and terror, and yet can calmly look on the Redeemer on the Cross and see in the future the immortality beyond the grave, see the brightness of the glory that will one day be to the faithful the inheritance of boundless joy, and so be comforted and gladdened even in sorrow and pain,—it is such faith we see realised in the repentant Jonah.

Again, we may here learn the reason of trials and troubles which so often disturb the currents of our life. What would it be if we were always in the sunshine, always prosperous? Should we not go our own way without a thought of fear? Would there not be, even to the most faithful, a risk of too great confidence, of a false assurance? Is it not true that when GOD brings us low, and makes us sad, then we remember Him with desire more fervent than ever, and are brought to the more vivid remembrance of our sins?

GOD doth not "willingly afflict the children of men."<sup>1</sup> "As a father chasteneth his own son, so

<sup>1</sup> Lam. iii. 33.

GOD chasteneth us for our profit.”<sup>1</sup> He speaks, as to Jonah, out of the darkness, and as to Elijah with “the still small voice” after the tempest, when the soul is bowed down and humbled in its own nothingness. He casts a shadow over the earth that we may look up and see the blessedness of a home where there is no change, no loss, no setting of the sun in the darkness; for only in Heaven they have “no night,” no need of rest after weariness, but an endless day of unknown blessedness. But while we are yet on earth the pressure and pain of the Cross will ever be the way of salvation. There are times when he “that saveth his life shall lose it,” and he only that loseth his life for CHRIST’S sake, “shall find it.”<sup>2</sup>

So may it be with us now in this chequered scene, when possibly wave upon wave of trial may pass over us, when at all events we are destined to some degree of passing trouble, and only while “we take up our cross daily” can we be followers of the Crucified. Let us learn betimes that it is good for a man that he “bear the yoke,” it may be, “in his youth;” and that, though GOD “cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Deut. viii. 5; Heb. xii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> S. Matt. xvi. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Lam. iii. 27, 32.

## IV.

### The restored Commission.

*"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."—Jonah iii. 1, 2.*

LAST Sunday we dwelt upon the penitence of the prophet Jonah, and saw how deeply contrite he had become, and how in thankfulness and submission he returned to GOD, notwithstanding the darkness of the trial which had encompassed him.

We now, as we follow his history, learn what GOD is to those who thus truly repent. To those who have never left Him, He says, as in the parable, "Son, thou art ever with Me." Of those who have fallen and yet have returned, are spoken the gracious words ; "It is meet that we should make merry and be glad ; for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found."<sup>1</sup> GOD may even

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xv. 24, 32.

restore all that had been forfeited. Thus David, the greatest of the kings, though so grievously fallen, is still known to us as the "man after GOD'S own heart." The chief of the Apostles is the one marked by deepest contrition. The first to see the Risen LORD, Mary Magdalene, was snatched as a brand out of the burning. So too among the prophets, the one most distinguished as the type of His Resurrection, is the one who had failed, but who had returned in penitential sorrow. For there is none equal to Jonah in this ; that he is set forth as a sign to the world, of that rising from the dead on which the greatest mysteries of salvation hang.

There is surely the greatest encouragement in such histories to those who having done wrong; perhaps very grievous wrong, and stained, perhaps, even with darkest sins,—encouragement to think, that there is honour and glory and a blessed restoration to the full love of GOD, if only they return out of the darkness into the Presence from which they had departed.

Jonah in his repentance, had returned to the temple ; no doubt he had offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving, the whole burnt offering, after the sacrifice for sin,—had shared again the covenanted services, and waited to know what GOD willed for him,

waited till he was restored to His favour. And there again after awhile, he heard afresh the word of GOD, which had been so dear and precious in earlier days ; but now heard with increased joy, because it spoke of renewed acceptance after his fall, and of restored hope for the future.

“ And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.”

There are certain points on which I would here dwell, and which we may regard as specially characteristic in what is thus revealed of GOD's dealings with His servants,—this coming again of the “word of the LORD.” We learn that GOD sent Jonah on the very same mission, in which he had failed before,—and yet with a marked difference distinguishing the second from the first call. The first call had been simply, “Go to Nineveh, and cry against it.” The second call is more definite and express. “Arise, go unto Nineveh, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.” The changed command, though full of restored confidence, implies a warning to be exact in fulfilling the will of GOD—to be careful as to giving the message exactly as he received it. It seems to say ; Lose not any part of a word of the message.

Risk not any further disobedience even in the least particular of the mission on which you are sent.

Let me point out the two important truths, which arise out of this eventful crisis in the prophet's life.

First—the exceeding mercy of GOD shown in this—viz., that He offers renewed opportunities to those who fail to profit by the first opportunity ; and it may be even opportunities of the very same kind. They may have to be followed after a different manner, but yet the same object, the same end may be set before us till finally accomplished.

You remember the case of the Israelites. They were called to enter the Holy Land when they reached Kadesh-barnea. And when through lack of faith and moral courage, they failed in their first call to go up and possess the land, still though after a wandering of forty years in the wilderness, they at last entered and possessed it. The land was to be won through much trial, but still the way was kept open to them, the opportunity remained. And it was so with Jonah. He at last accomplished his mission to Nineveh, though after sore trial.

Secondly, there is this further wonder in the forgiving and forbearing of GOD, that He causes the trials of the returning penitent, to be the means of good. Think how this is the case with man's life of



labour, which is the punishment of the first sin, how GOD has caused it to be an exercise of pleasure, a very enjoyment and means of health. Think how woman's penalty of sorrow and pain in childbearing is followed by the exquisite joy, "that a man is born into the world." These are illustrations of an universal truth, that the throes of penance have consolations and secret joys, the peculiar treasure of the penitent, and that by means of these even penal sufferings, if accepted with lowly submission and thankful trust, the Spirit of GOD works in the soul yet greater miracles of mercy. And there is this further reward and encouragement, that those who have passed through the experience of such penitential struggles and fears, may become afterwards a blessing to others, because they can tell of the dangers that had beset them, of the mercy through which they have been saved ; and thus may the more effectually, from their own deeper knowledge, save a brother or a sister from their doom, inheriting the very blessing first given to the penitent Apostle ; "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."<sup>1</sup>

So it was with Jonah. The very thing he had failed to do, was given him again to carry out with renewed strength, and with greater power of persua-

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke xxii. 32.

siveness, though now with a sad, though fruitful, experience. The work from which he had shrunk before he now accomplished with comparative ease, and a greater assurance, though as a humbled penitent.

Again, we may see here how the grace of GOD, not only restores a man, generally, as it were, but renews him in the very point in which he had sinned and failed. The great prophet, Moses, slew a man in his wrath, but he became, through grace, "very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."<sup>1</sup> S. John, who had wished fire to come down from heaven, to destroy the enemies of CHRIST,<sup>2</sup> became known for ever in the Church as the Apostle of love. S. Paul, who "sent men and women" to prison, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter,"<sup>3</sup> afterwards became "all things to all men, that he might by all means save some."<sup>4</sup> And she of whom we have already spoken, out of whom were cast the seven devils, was the one who was enabled to minister to the Holiest—herself purified, to bear witness to His pure love.

Take courage then, you who are beset with some special sin, which yet may have gone on long, and

<sup>1</sup> Numb. xii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> S. Luke ix. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Acts viii. 3; ix. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 22.

acquired great power over you ; it may be rooted out through timely repentance, and the very contrary grace implanted in you.

Think what is your besetting sin. It is that which most often recurs in your self-examinations ; that which most frequently leads you to fall ; that which you feel most constantly working within you. The surest proof of true repentance is to set yourself earnestly to pray, to strive against this particular fault. To do this is to arise to do GOD'S will as He more especially calls you ; to show courage, to make effort from which you have before shrunk, to return into GOD'S Presence, from which you had fled.

Let us learn from the long catalogue of those who have fallen and have been recovered, to take hope for ourselves. GOD desires a perfect, not an imperfect work. Let us not take a low aim ; though we may have to struggle up from the lowest depth. The higher our aim, the greater hope we may have, that in GOD'S good time and way, fresh light and life will come. Not once nor twice, nor seven times, but until "seventy times seven," His pardoning voice will be heard, as we turn to Him.

No one indeed can tell what grace, what glory may crown our future acts of penitence and faith, even to those who have put too great a strain on the

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infinite mercies of GOD, if still they but turn to Him.

But who can tell what the future may be, if the present opportunity be lost? Who can say, that Jonah would have been called again, if he had failed to listen to the second call? A time must at last come, when it will be too late to "find a place for repentance," though one seek it "carefully with tears."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 17.

## V.

### The Warning to the Penitent.

*"Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry?"—Jonah iv. 4.*

THERE is yet one more passage in the life of Jonah for us to consider. We last saw him, himself a penitent, going forth as a preacher of repentance. He went to deliver to the city of Nineveh the Divine sentence; "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." And he was faithful in the fulfilment of this solemn charge. We then read how, as the result of his preaching, the Ninevites repented of their evil deeds; they "believed GOD and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."

Jonah having delivered his message, had gone outside the city to watch the effect of the Divine judgment, expecting its overthrow; and when he saw that the threatened ruin came not,—“it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.”

There are circumstances which ought to be considered when we would form a judgment of Jonah's state of mind at this crisis.

He lived and served GOD under the old covenant, which spoke chiefly of Divine judgments, and comparatively little of Divine mercy. He had been trained and habituated to the idea of punishment surely following sin, and as yet, the forgiveness of sin and the redeeming love of GOD were but very partially revealed, even to prophets. Added to this, as observed before, there was the feeling of the patriot, of a faithful Israelite, fearing lest his country should suffer from the powerful Assyrian nation, of which Nineveh was the capital city. He dreaded the growing power of the enemies of his race. The love of his country was strong in him; he had something of the deep feeling which S. Paul expressed in such a remarkable manner, when he said, that he would wish himself "to be accursed from CHRIST for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."<sup>1</sup>

And these feelings must have worked in him so as even to desire the ruin which he was sent to proclaim. But it is also true that the old thoughts which had led him before to abandon the service of GOD, not-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ix. 3.

withstanding his repentance, had not wholly died within him. They now rose up again, and for the moment overmastered him, and he was moved even to anger at the sight of GOD'S mercy to the sinner, because his own mind had not been carried out, and his message of destruction was overruled by an unlooked-for act of Divine mercy, in which he had no share.

There is yet another point that we have to consider; if we would fairly judge the conduct of Jonah. When in this troubled condition, though with a mind not wholly one with the mind of GOD, yet at the same time he was truly looking to GOD, and could pray to Him as one wholly dependent on Him; "He prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray Thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that Thou art a gracious GOD, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." It was a state of conflicting feelings, his will thwarted, GOD'S longsuffering not fully understood, the burden of anxious thoughts depressing him, and he sees no relief but in death; "Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." Like Elijah, though under different circumstances, desponding, dis-

appointed, he could not be patient, and trustful ; he could not wait on to see GOD'S purposes, and what more would be given him to do.

Yet, like Elijah, he was tenderly borne with. GOD even withholds any reproof or censure. He but seeks to teach His servant by a sign, such as might personally touch his heart. For this, GOD raised up the "gourd," and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, that the burning heat of the Eastern sun might not distress him ; and then, while he felt the soothing influence of the overshadowing foliage, GOD caused it to decay as rapidly as it had sprung up. "And the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted," and again "wished in himself to die."

And then GOD pleaded with His servant, bidding him to think how, if he were grieved for the plant, that sheltered him in the hour of his distress, a plant "which came up in a night, and perished in a night,"—how much more GOD must desire to spare "Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand ; and also much cattle."

Many thoughts will arise on the close of this narrative. We might well dwell on the tender mercy



of GOD to the repentant Ninevites, as well as to the erring prophet ; or on GOD'S mysterious dealings in overruling evil to good. But it will be more to our profit to take home a solemn warning, which we may surely gather from what is told us of the prophet.

How striking it is that even in a prophet's soul the same dispositions he had renounced when he returned to GOD, could rise up again and overcome him. Yet this is what we all are liable to. How different we all are in times of penitence, and when we return to our ordinary course. Do not old temptations, old passions, the same wrong thoughts which led us astray before, rise up again, and sometimes with even stronger force, because of having been long kept back ? Do they not oftentimes return and master us, even when we have repented of them ? The reason is this. We are too much given to regard repentance as a state of mind for a time, a thing soon over and done.

But what really is repentance ? It is a state to be continued and persevered in. Contrition is a power that is to penetrate the soul, to make it and to keep it tender and soft ; and this cannot be at once. The condition of the penitent, grieving at having grieved GOD and JESUS CHRIST, and fearing to relapse, is

a state which is to abide to the end, deepening and never lapsing back, or else it will pass, and the influence to be worked within will altogether fail.

You remember our LORD'S words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."<sup>1</sup> The words mean, 'Having once sinned, be on your special guard. Having once known certain temptations, watch evermore against their recurrence.' You who have known what it is, e.g., to have bad tempers arise in your mind, must use constant inward recollection and prayer to keep down the irritable feelings. If you have learnt to hate thoughts which lead you astray, you have to keep up that horror at the possible recurrence of the thought. To cease from a penitent state of mind, till sin is wholly vanquished, is for a soldier in some dangerous country to lay down his arms and sleep, forgetful of the danger of a night attack.

If Jonah had kept in mind what he had learnt in his first remorse, he would not only have fulfilled his call to serve GOD, but would have been led on to submit himself to all the will of GOD, and be changed in the character and temper of his mind.

Again, consider why Jonah became angry. It was because he had not learnt what he might have known

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxvi. 41.

of the character of GOD. He looked at things differently from what GOD looked at them, and the consequence was the temptation to resist, to complain, and to despair. Now is not all forming of plans and eager desires, without considering the will of GOD, liable to the same wrong feeling? Do not our frettings and inward murmurings, and our sore disappointments, arise from this same cause? There are evils which GOD has permitted to save from greater evils, or to be the means of accomplishing some unexpected good. We cannot clearly see the mysteries of the ways of GOD. We often think that the world might have been made much better than it is. We cannot always see the reason of things. There are ways and workings that GOD permits, and which He uses for His own purposes, which seem hard and unreasonable to our mind when we have to endure them, but which afterwards are seen to be great mercies.

But when we have to meet these forms of trial, if in that hour we resist and refuse to submit our judgment, refuse to believe that what GOD wills must be good for us to bear; if we fret against it, and complain, and long to die rather than bear on, what is this but anger against GOD, rebellion against Him and resistance to His purposes? We need indeed

much more than mere abstinence from wrong, we need not only to endure what seems to be evil, trustfully, believing that it may be the hiding of some future blessing, or if the trial continues, knowing how GOD tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, we need further to learn to conform our will, our mind, to the mind of GOD,—to seek to understand His dealings, and to think as He thinks, lovingly, trustfully. Whatever may be the ordering of the mysterious destiny that besets us, is it not a creature's true condition to adapt his purposes, and his feelings, to the purposes of his Creator?

Let us ever remember that there has gone before us, as our Example, One Who in yielding to the Will of the FATHER, took away "the sting of death," and saw His FATHER'S glory even on the Cross, and in the horror and agony of that terrible death, worked out for us an endless and a blessed immortality. Following our Redeemer in perfect lowly trust, we must learn to be patient, and to become, like Him, "perfect through sufferings." Is it not for us to believe, though we cannot see,—to lay hold of the hope set before us, and to trust the promise that is working itself out, even in what seems at the time so hopeless? Is it not the teaching of the Passion and the Cross, that there is an unspeak-

able blessedness in having a yielded will, a willingness of mind, a cheerful endurance, knowing that the way to glory is to be united with our LORD as a willing sacrifice, holy, acceptable in His sight, as our reasonable service ?

## The Apostolic Ministry.<sup>1</sup>

*"And He gave some Apostles ; and some Prophets ; and some Evangelists ; and some Pastors and Teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."—*  
Eph. iv. 11, 12.

THE Church sometimes commemorates her single Apostles, to impress on us the power of their individual characters ; sometimes she commemorates certain Apostles together, to impress on us the power of their combined ministry. Our LORD sent forth His disciples "by two and two."<sup>2</sup> The Church is careful to preserve this law of her LORD, and shows, by such a Festival as we are now keeping, the Divine principle of love binding together the individual members of the one body in their common service.

I will take this occasion to dwell on the principle of the Christian ministry, which the Church to-day

<sup>1</sup> Preached at the Parish Church on the Festival of SS. Philip and James, 1870, and at the time privately printed by request.

<sup>2</sup> S. Mark vi. 7.

brings before our minds, in recalling to our memory for special honour two of our LORD'S Apostles.

At the time of S. Paul the Apostolic college had grown, and its component parts were developed. In the text he speaks of different modes of ministry, distinguishing them rather by the different character of their works, than by difference of order, the names which he employs denoting the kind of mission entrusted, or the office given to be fulfilled.

He mentions first "Apostles," men possessing a plenary inspiration to teach the world with authority, and to lay the foundations of the whole fabric of the Church, which was to be raised on them, as they themselves are built on the one primary Foundation, JESUS CHRIST Himself;—secondly, "Prophets and Evangelists," men without any settled cure, bearing everywhere throughout the earth the Word of GOD, wandering teachers, who penetrated among all nations, to awaken the first stirrings of life, and instruct whomsoever the grace of GOD had drawn to seek Him;—thirdly, "Pastors and Teachers," the fixed guides of souls, ministrants at settled altars, abiding centres of the Church's sacramental system, and authoritative exponents of her truth according to the traditionary creeds of the Church. S. Paul describes the ministry as it may be viewed in action, from its

beginning to the present day, and as it will last on to the end ; and implying its unity in the midst of considerable variety ; for evidently he connects the Apostles of its opening history with the pastors of all succeeding generations. His words represent the changing system as one. He connects all together as carrying out, by their separate works and different phases of ministry, suited to the varying circumstances of the Church's history, the one purpose of GOD. Afterwards the Apostle details the objects of this ministry, and shows how it embraces the entire results of our LORD'S coming,—“the perfecting of the saints,” the complete formation of the saintly character in separate souls ; “the work of the ministry,” a term which includes the whole system of Divine service, the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice, and public teaching ; “the edifying of the body of CHRIST,” the gradual building up of the fabric of the Communion of saints, in which GOD is to be for ever glorified in heaven.

Now we may ask, why these objects are to be thus obtained ? What need is there of a ministry at all for their fulfilment ? Why is there to be any intervention between GOD and the soul ? Why are not these objects, which are clearly of a purely spiritual character, to be obtained by every man through his own personal intercourse with GOD ? Why are men



among their fellow-men necessary as channels of grace, when the gifts of the universal FATHER may be supposed to be shed forth upon His creatures freely of His own pure love?

Several reasons may be shown for this appointment. Firstly, it is part of a system. The ministry does not stand alone. It has pleased GOD, as a general rule, to employ outward means in communicating inward life. Truth, for example, does not come direct to the soul by the HOLY SPIRIT'S inspiration alone. Human language is employed. The Bible is an instrumentality for conveying truth. Through the outward forms of words the Mind of GOD reveals itself. The grace of regeneration, again, is conveyed, according to the same law, through baptism, which acts as an intervening medium. Again, the sacred Humanity of JESUS, His flesh and blood, which impart eternal life, are not communicated directly, but through the elements of bread and wine. Just, then, as GOD employs these inanimate instruments for conveying grace, so He ordains a living agency,—certain men, whose acts and words are used by Him, as He uses the forms of sacraments, and whom He commissions and ordains as parts of a great living system. It may seem assuming to say, that we stand between you and GOD. Nor is the

term strictly correct ; for nothing can possibly be between the GOD of the spirits of all flesh and these spirits. He is with them and in them, from the very fact that "in Him they live, and move, and have their being." But GOD communicates grace to His creatures only according to certain laws, and one such law is that He works through means ; and thus, through certain acts done and certain words spoken by certain men commissioned by Him, He conveys the gifts of His redeeming love. GOD is pleased to use merely blind matter in the forms of sacraments. He uses also the living, breathing agency of your fellow-men.

This principle of intermediate agency is, in fact, a universal law. Nowhere throughout the creation can we escape the agency of outward means. We reach forth to GOD in the material world through nature. We do not find GOD without nature. It is equally true of the operations of the mind, as it is of the body. And the same truth applies as strictly to the spiritual life of souls. The hidden GOD opens the secrets of His covenanted promises through appointed agencies which compass us about. We are in the midst of a vast sacramental system as to our life of grace, just as we are in the midst of a vast material world as to the life of nature ; and the human ministry is

but a part, though a most prominent part, of this system.

2. Further, if you trace up the sources of grace, they will be found treasured up in the Person of CHRIST. They come to us not direct from GOD, but through the Incarnation, i.e., through the human nature which has been taken up into GOD in CHRIST. Now, here at once is intervention between GOD and the soul of man. "There is One GOD," but there is also as certainly "One Mediator between GOD and man, the Man CHRIST JESUS."<sup>1</sup> The Manhood of JESUS is made the storehouse, the well-spring of all grace. Even as GOD has committed all judgment to our LORD, because He is the Son of Man, so has He committed to Him all saving graces, as the result of the meritorious Sacrifice offered by Him, as Man. They are in Him first, and from Him they are derived and distributed. He is the Rock from which the waters flow, and He is now in Heaven ministering before the FATHER, offering the Sacrifice which He has finished, that its virtue may perpetually flow out. Humanity in JESUS exalted in Heaven, is the medium through which all prayer reaches GOD, and through which equally all grace descends. The stream of grace passes through a

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5.

human medium, and this ministry, this intervention which thus takes place in the unseen world, GOD would represent here on earth through the agency of men. It is GOD'S appointed means of applying the graces of the Incarnation, and therefore necessary. The human ministry is the representative of the ministry of JESUS. The sacramental system is a sign and pledge, as it is the assured means, of what is invisibly and secretly imparted to the soul. We are certified of the inward by the outward. What we can see and handle, assures us of what we cannot see or feel. The first Disciples saw the living Face of JESUS in the flesh, and through it they saw the Living GOD. The outward form helped them to see GOD, Who is a Spirit, and was the sure pledge of His Presence. And now the unseen Manhood of CHRIST, the One Mediator between GOD and man, is seen and known through the men who represent Him, the human ministers who come to you in His stead. They are the shadows of His substance; representatives and pledges of Himself. And as you see us standing at your altars to offer sacrifice, and hear our voices absolving from sin, and see our hands uplifted to bless, you see through us the Living CHRIST, see Him at the heavenly Altar, see His uplifted hands, hear His voice of blessing. A human

ministry is ordained, because an Incarnation of GOD is to be represented. Subordinate channels of a human kind are selected, because the Source of grace is human. Men are the agents of a great system whose centre is the Man CHRIST JESUS. And as the Blessed Trinity are reached through Him Who, though equal to the FATHER as touching His Godhead, is inferior to the FATHER as touching His Manhood, so grace flows from His Manhood through a subordinate agency kindred to Himself, because of the common nature. The visible human ministry is at once the sign and pledge of the mediatorial efficacy and powers of the Manhood of GOD.

3. There is yet a further purpose in this appointment. The whole system of the Gospel is one of love; its object is to knit the creature to GOD in love. He would bind Himself to us, and us to Himself, by links of a common sympathy.

The Gospel is not merely the revelation of truth, nor one of love only, abstractedly regarded. It is intended to be an everlasting bond of union, of heart with heart, so closely knit that we may be one, as with each other so with GOD, even as CHRIST is One with the FATHER. "As Thou, FATHER, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. John xvii. 21.

Now the system of the Gospel is throughout marked by this principle. Our LORD'S own ministry was founded on this idea. His High Priesthood was the more perfect because of His common nature and His power of sympathy, as S. Paul reveals in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Therefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."<sup>1</sup> Our LORD'S sufferings were in part permitted, that His fellowship with suffering man might be complete. His temptations were universal, and His enduring them enlarged this deep tenderness and power of sympathy. And this is stated to be a general law. "For every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to GOD, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."<sup>2</sup> And this "taking from among men," this humanity in the Priest, is shown to be essential, because it was of the first importance to commit the ministry to one, "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he also is compassed with infirmity."<sup>3</sup> The whole idea of

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 17, 18.<sup>2</sup> Heb. v. 1.<sup>3</sup> Heb. v. 2.

the Priesthood of Melchisedec is grounded on this fitness. After repeating and applying to our LORD, the Psalmist's prophetic address, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," the Apostle adds, "Who in the days of His flesh, when He offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect,"—perfected, that is, through trial and suffering, by which this entire oneness with humanity was learnt,—“He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.”<sup>1</sup>

This same idea runs through the whole ordering of the Christian ministry. The same ground of fitness is to be found in our subordinate agency, in the mere human instrument, in that ministry of men which is to represent our LORD'S ministry. The main reason stated why GOD works through us, is the same as S. Paul describes as the essential condition of our LORD'S Priesthood. It is because of the human sympathy which is thus brought to bear, and which can be obtained only through employing human agents. Our fitness is on the very ground of our common

<sup>1</sup> Heb. v. 7—9.

infirmity, our common liability to sin. It is because GOD would have love, the love of personal fellowship in trial and need, run throughout the ministrations of His grace. The very reason why we are commissioned to plead the atoning sacrifice is because we need its virtue, as greatly as those in the midst of whom we minister. The very reason why we are commissioned to absolve, is because we too have sins and transgressions, which as surely require the same application of absolving grace. The very reason why we have authority to bless is because we feel the same necessity of seeking ceaseless blessing for ourselves. It is because we are of the same nature with those to whom we minister, because we are merely creatures, because what we profess to give cannot be our own giving.

It is remarkable that this very circumstance which provokes the world to reject our ministry, is the cause of our being ordained of GOD. For men reject the ministerial Priesthood, because we are creatures like themselves, and they charge us with an assumption of undue authority. The mind of the world is in this respect in direct antagonism to the Mind of GOD. For the very ground of our fitness in His sight is the sympathy grounded on the common necessity. The ministerial commission is instituted because of the common sinfulness and need of the



same grace for the Priest himself, equally as for the people. If the world would carry its own premises to their legitimate conclusion, it would reject CHRIST; for Holy Scripture calls Him, as we have seen, a "faithful High Priest," on account of His perfect human sympathy, obtained through similar temptations with His brethren. And it is indeed evident, that there is a tendency to reject the Incarnation prevalent amongst us on account of the mystery of His human nature, equally as there is a tendency to reject the Apostolic ministry. The same state of mind that rejects a human ministry, because of its humanity, tends to reject CHRIST because of His having assumed a human nature. It is the very tenderness of GOD, the very depth of the sympathy of the love of GOD, such as man's heart cannot comprehend, which tempts to infidelity. The very humiliation, so it seems, of the true fellow-feeling in CHRIST, is against CHRIST being received. And it is the same tendency which leads men to disbelieve, as ordained for their salvation, a ministry simply "taken from among men," because they question how men can minister to men the things of GOD; and yet it is "the Man CHRIST JESUS," on Whom the whole ministry of grace rests, and through Whom all life proceeds.

It is therefore an ungrounded charge, that we put CHRIST aside, when we make much of the ministry of CHRIST. Nor is there the smallest truth in the feeling, that the free access of the soul to GOD is hindered by the assertion of an instrumentality connecting GOD and the soul. How, indeed, could GOD give such instruments, if they were to shut out Himself? And yet "*He gave some Apostles,*" &c. But here is the real root of all opposition to the Church's system. It is the assertion of individual freedom, refusing to be bound to subordinate means. It is the idea of every man being sufficient to himself in seeking to supply the needs of his own soul; that every one is, in fact, his own teacher, and his own Priest.

And yet there is a sense in which it is most strictly true that every faithful Christian is a Priest. For Holy Scripture describes the redeemed, as offering thanks to GOD because He made them "priests unto GOD."<sup>1</sup> To forget this is as fatal as to forget the Priesthood of the minister of GOD; for it is part of the same sacramental system. For you all need a capacity for receiving grace, equally as the ministers of GOD need to be made capable of being the channels of it; and the capacity for receiving more grace,

<sup>1</sup> Rev. i. 6.

and of offering prayer and praise to Almighty GOD, is given in holy baptism.

We could not absolve a heathen. We could not communicate an unbaptised person. And why is this? It is because baptism gives you a priestly character, gives you spiritual fitness for receiving CHRIST and His merits. In a state of nature this were impossible. You have a spiritual capacity through your baptism, which entitles you to receive the further gifts. In a common Priesthood, therefore, both minister and people meet. The minister of grace and the receiver of grace may well work together, because of this common link binding them together to GOD, while yet a special Priesthood makes the one capable of conveying this grace to the other.

As, therefore, you reverence your own Priesthood, so you will reverence ours ; and we too, on the other hand, shall feel more truly the weight of our ministerial office, as we reverence your spiritual capacity ; and both yours and ours unite us together in our One LORD.

We must, however, both be watchful, lest in the means we forget the end ; lest in the instrument we forget the One Doer of the work. If we exalt the ministry, as Scripture leads us to do, we must re-

member it is only to make men see when or where CHRIST works.

For He is really the only true Priest. He is alone the Life. He worketh all our work in us. He is the real Celebrant, Who stands at our altars, offering Himself through us to the FATHER. He is the real Absolver, Who cleanses from sin, and gives the HOLY GHOST, putting away sin through us. He is really the One Who blesses, when we use His words and copy His action. If we seem ever to magnify our office, it is really only because we would make much of the grace which we minister. We would magnify the means of blessing, because we know the greatness of the gift, and long to impart it, not for its own sake merely, but for CHRIST'S glory. Who gives it, and their sakes for whom it is sent.

Moreover, this system must continue. It is not of yesterday or to-day. It has ever worked, and must work on, to prepare the way of the LORD. It has its mission, as S. Paul assures us, "until we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the SON of GOD, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST."<sup>1</sup>

When the deeply longed for end comes, when the universal cry of creation for its perfected redemption

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 13.

is fulfilled, then, and not till then, the ministry of CHRIST will be lost in CHRIST, even as, at the consummation of all things, the mediatorial kingdom itself will cease, even CHRIST Himself cease to minister His grace to us ; for then " He shall have delivered up the kingdom to the FATHER," and GOD will be " All in all."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

## The Church's Present Work.<sup>1</sup>

*"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."—*Rev. xxi. 3.

THE Apocalypse is a series of visions rapidly passing in succession before the mind's eye, each a separate and distinct picture in itself. Their power consists greatly in this—that the beginning and the end of the mystery which the vision unfolds are brought into one. We see the working out of the different designs of GOD as though they were being rapidly fulfilled. A few verses are enough to set before us the final perfect blessedness of some great promise of which we are already tasting the first fruits. Looking at passing events through the medium of the prophetic revelations we see as GOD sees ; we lay hold of the future as we grasp the present ; we

<sup>1</sup> Preached at the Opening of the New Aisle of S. Mary Magdalene's, Paddington, October 19, 1870, and afterwards published by request.

are carried into eternity, and already feel its promised bliss, as we realize what we already are. The whole vast future is included in the consciousness of our present gain.

So it is in the text. In this one verse are expressed in mystic imagery the Incarnation of GOD, and its present immediate consequences. For "the tabernacle of GOD being with men," means the presence of the SON of GOD in the flesh making His home on earth in Sacraments, and through Sacraments in the hearts of men; and the consequence is an intimate closeness of relation established between oneself and GOD; He is become our GOD, and we are become His people. For what greater assurance could there be of love and acceptance with GOD than a fellowship of nature, an abiding Presence of GOD Himself, ever giving Himself to us? Having come and given Himself He abides, never to leave us. This is the blessedness which we already feel as our assured possession. This "tabernacling" with its sure results of living union, is our present joy in the midst of our many sorrows, and the trials of our perishing state. The next verse opens to us the future, the confidence of an endless unalloyed bliss, when sorrow will have wholly ceased. For the verse speaks of what cannot be here, but will assuredly be hereafter, to all those in

whom the Incarnation has its perfect work. "GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."<sup>1</sup> It speaks as of what will quickly be, of a far-off future as all but come, so certain is its realization, so determined the consequences of our union with our LORD. The revelation tells of a future, for there is no time on earth in which we can look to be free from pain, no time when fresh tears may not start into our eyes. But it speaks of this future as what is instantly to come, as the unavoidable sequence of what already is. It is the certain result, though not as yet accomplished. But we are already experiencing its bliss by a vivid anticipation, while we realize what the Incarnation of GOD has done for us ; we anticipate the future, we rise to feel as though already the Hand of GOD were soothing our sorrow with an undisturbed peace, as though tears were no more to flow down the furrowed cheek.

The connexion between this passage and the work we are engaged in to-day is evident ; for the completion of every new church in which the highest truth is set forth as it is here, is a renewing and pal-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. vii. 17, xxi. 4.



pable representation of the vision of the text. For here has been raised a fabric that has become an abiding dwelling-place of GOD, a home for the Incarnate. You have built up a place for the development of His power. You have formed a fresh centre for the going forth of the Everlasting, a centre round which will gather through the advancing ages the "peculiar people" whom by His grace He draws to Himself, into whom He enters to abide, to be their GOD. As the expanded wings of this sacred fabric have been spread out before our eyes, and we see now the whole structure in its grandeur and beauty, we feel it to be a "tabernacle" which the most High GOD will not disdain, but will bless as a centre of His wondrous work. We feel it to be a fresh realization this very day of the promise that the "Tabernacle of GOD is with men." And thus it becomes a quickening afresh of the hope to be fulfilled in that rapidly hastening day, when this abiding of the Incarnate GOD shall have its full accomplishment, when the last pang of anguish shall have smitten our quivering frame, when the last bitterness of death shall have passed for ever. As we rejoice in the accomplishment of this great work we have undertaken, and on which GOD is setting His seal, we feel a springing love and higher inward joy, because it tells us of the approach of the

inconceivable peace, the calm glory of that tearless, painless, deathless state, which will be ours, when the temple built of living souls, and continually growing up within the Paradise of GOD, shall have gathered us within its sacred enclosure to be there enshrined for ever.

Again, in this vision we have the key-note of the mission which GOD has manifestly committed to us in this our generation. Let me here speak of the revival within the Church, of which we are still feeling the quickening impulse. There have been different stages of this great movement; the one succeeding the other and adding something that was wanting in the other. The earlier part of the Church movement was occupied in teaching the distinctiveness of the life of the Church, when viewed in relation to the surrounding sects, and the doctrines which lie at the foundation of its existence, as e.g., the succession of holy Orders, the claims of the Episcopate, the value of Tradition, and the authority of the Fathers. Afterwards it grew by degrees to be felt that these and such like truths, however great and stirring, as unquestionably their first revival was, were nevertheless but a dry and formal system, when viewed alone. It was asked, Why this solemn mystical organisation? Why this care about the

Apostolical succession, and the inviolability of Orders ?

Then the movement advanced to a far mightier conviction than had been dreamed of at first, viz., that all this ministerial system was only a machinery to guard and exhibit the deep inward verity of the Incarnation of GOD. Not, indeed, that this stupendous truth was unknown and untaught during the same time, but that as the living central life of the Church's being, as the one most treasured possession committed to her keeping, it had not been adequately realized, nor its penetrating and pervading force at first apprehended.

When this point was gained, the movement took a further range. It began to be felt that this mighty master truth of the Incarnation of GOD, of GOD present in our nature, in our souls and bodies, must needs, if it be true, have an expression in act, must take an outward form, must be presented to the eyes, must, as S. John says, "be looked upon, be handled."<sup>1</sup> From this conviction ritual grew, as a natural sequence of scholastic dogmatic theology. The truth which for a while had been breathing in words, in books, in sermons, claimed at last to speak, to move, to touch us in outward acts, in visible representations.

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. John i. 1.

A different view of the Church's Services then began to prevail. If indeed our worship be addressed to a GOD present with us, if we come to Church to meet GOD, and to adore Him, then our service must needs be more than an intellectual exercise, or expression of devout feeling ; and the consequence of this truth was felt in the new relative value attached to the different portions of the service. Sermons, e.g., which once were all in all, sank in comparison with the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and His Blood.

Out of this consciousness arose the great ritual movement, the tidal wave of which still flows on, and must continue to spread, as the central life of the Church's worship is felt to be the "tabernacling of GOD with men." But already the movement has opened into another phase of active development ; it has been felt that if GOD be thus near to us in our service, and we touch Him, and He is in us, though unseen, it cannot be enough to surround with honour the outward Sacrament. The life of the worshipper becomes an object of intense care, it must be itself sacramental, in order to correspond with the greatness of the Divine Mystery, with which it holds such high communion. The movement thus took the shape of increased anxiety to cherish a higher standard of personal life, so as to render us more

meet to become ourselves the "tabernacle of GOD," to be one with Him,—as in sacramental mystery, so in living grace of a Divine life. Thus Retreats, Quiet days, the use of Confession, and rules of personal guidance, and a more systematic teaching of the laws of spiritual life, and the principles of Religious Communities, have become matters of earnest care. And this is the phase of the movement which is now spreading abroad everywhere such a flood of devotional treatises and manuals of prayer of a higher Catholic type than we were used to of old, and which must necessarily form and sustain the growing mind of the rising generation in a practical view of the true faith. And from the same cause is spreading also everywhere an enthusiastic desire to devote the life thus fed and inspired to varied works of love and mercy, or to contemplation.

Thus then we have the key-note to the whole series of progressive changes of the Church movement of the last forty years. It arose at first as the waking up to the truth of the Church's inner mystical life and the Incarnation; it became, when that truth was seen, a working out from it to its legitimate consequences. The movement will have attained its climax when ritual has settled into a fixed rule, and the discipline of life is adequately set forth. But

what will all this be but an acknowledgment of the truth of the text, that "GOD is with us and that we are His people?"

Again the principle of this text is the solution of all great practical questions of the day. We are now anxiously considering proposals for the revision of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>1</sup> There are two modes of viewing this question. We may view it as a matter of scholarship, or one of spiritual discernment. If the Bible is to be viewed as any other book, as Homer, or Livy, and the object be only to ascertain the meaning of its words and phrases, its antiquities and customs, then our anxiety would be to secure the most learned scholars; and research and accuracy of verbal criticism would be the essential requirements. The question of schism or heresy would not apply—no one would require a true Catholic faith to qualify the interpreter of Demosthenes or Horace. But if Holy Scripture be a revealing of the Incarnate GOD, to be received through the Spirit by the spiritual mind; if it contain things "hid from the wise and prudent," from the Scribe and disputer of this world, and its pages lie open to those only who, being in the mystical Body which is "the pillar and ground

<sup>1</sup> The Revision Committee were sitting when this Sermon was preached.

of the truth," possess the mind and instinct promised to the members of that Body ; if the Bible be a kind of sacrament, the outer form of an inner mind, and so can only be apprehended aright by those who have the key to the unlocking of that inner mind ; if the discerning of the Word of GOD be a grace depending on this promise which we cannot look for except within the circle in which the Spirit of a Divine power of interpretation abides,—then it is not merely scholarship and research that is required, but also a share in the spiritual intelligence which is the gift of the Spirit in the Body of CHRIST, and there only according to the promise. For surely those alone who recognise GOD in His Tabernacle on earth—the Incarnation and the mystical Body in which the Incarnate dwells—are in this condition. They alone can be of one mind with the Spirit Which dwells in the Church of GOD—they alone can compare "spiritual things with spiritual" in the fulness of their import. Others may discern the outward forms of grammatical use, but these alone can look to be led into the inner truth. In one word the interpretation of the Scriptures is a sacramental work ; and how can those who deny the Godhead enshrined in the Word, or those who deny the Office of the Church in its interpretation, be capable of discerning aright the hidden

mystery? There are lines that limit the power of the interpretation of the Word of GOD, as there were lines which limited the course of the inspiration which first gave it to the world.

The case is the same in that great domestic question which affects the moral purity of this country more vitally than any social principle that has of late become the subject of legislation amongst us. I allude to the question of marriage with the deceased wife's sister. If marriage were a mere social contract there would still be room for anxious inquiry as to the expediency of allowing one to be a possible successor to the wife, who must needs have during her lifetime so ready an access to the home as her sister. But this would be merely matter of expediency such as may fairly be left to argument, and which a national legislature might settle as it pleased, because it would only affect rules and customs of social intercourse. But if marriage have at all the gift of a sacramental grace, if GOD tabernacling in our nature recreated, as a consequence, the marriage union, restoring it to its original mystery, then redeemed man and his redeemed wife become what He had willed them to be in the first Paradise. Our LORD announced the change in reconstituting the marriage law, when the time of the laxity allowed to



the Jews was past,—when He declared man and wife to be “one flesh.” They are one and their relations one with them, and thus a hallowed circle is necessarily drawn around the two now united families, so that each is to the other as of the same blood, and freely and trustfully they thenceforth may move and mix in the united homes, because of this sacramental mystery which binds all these members in their several degrees. The Incarnation, the tabernacling of GOD in our nature, has sanctified that nature in its mixture as in itself, and made the marriages of His elect a real oneness, as Himself is One with the whole Body, His Bride the Church.

Once more, the text has a very close connexion with doctrines affecting our relations with another world. Such, e.g., is the question floating anxiously in the midst of us, whether we may pray for the dead, and whether the dead pray for us. If there were no known links binding this world and the world within the veil; if we were separate portions of humanity having no common head; if no common life ran through the two worlds, and we had no common hopes and fears, no mutual experience of each other's inward estate; or again, if the one portion of the body were torpid and lifeless, while the other alone were alive and active,—then indeed there would be

no ground for supposing any intercommunion, any fellowship of prayer, any mutual response or desire, any interchange of thought, or mingling of interests. But if GOD is tabernacling not in one or another distinct personality, but in our common nature ; if He is the One Life of the whole mystical Body, uniting all members in Himself ; if He is the real living Head, and all we are 'members, and death makes no difference in this connexion ; if all still live in Him, they who are within equally as we who are without the veil, bound in Him by the laws of the same spiritual consciousness, and our interests one, our sympathies and desires one, and both intensely alive, only under different conditions, we under the burden of the flesh, they only in the power of the spirit,—if both we and they are alike before the throne of GOD, and serve Him day and night in His Temple, though they are nearer to the Throne, and in a higher court of the Temple,—then how can we doubt that the prayer begun on earth continues in Heaven, that mutual acts of intercession bind us still, as in an earthly union, with those who are gone before ; that our common prayers and praises rise up together in a mingled stream from the censer in the Angel's Hands,—and that we may thus help them as they surely help us, while we are hastening onward to-

gether to the one end, and neither they without us, nor we without them, can be perfected? This fact follows necessarily from the great central truth, that we are the tabernacle of the living GOD, that He dwells in us as in one spirit of supernatural life, that He is our One GOD, and we are His one people. To deny this ministry of prayer to the Blessed who are with GOD, would be to deprive them of one great exercise of their love in CHRIST; to deny it to us would be to cast us far off from that Temple which fills Heaven and earth, to withdraw from us our spiritual relationship in the tabernacle of GOD, and make our partings with those whom we love and follow with eager longings, to be as the partings of the heathen for whom death had no future.

O Church of our Fathers, Home of our best affections, nurse of our only true life, which GOD has preserved for ages, by miracles, by signs, and mighty wonders, and a stretched out Arm; O sphere of the power of the living GOD, of the love and the merits of the precious Blood of JESUS, Who died for us, when shall we freely breathe the air of the fulness of the truth, which is rightfully ours, because we are a portion of that true Tabernacle of GOD in which is enshrined the entire faith, "once delivered to the

Saints?" When without check or rebuke, without gainsaying or suspicion, shall all which the first Revelation gave to be the food of the regenerate, the perfect reconciliation of GOD and man, and of man in GOD with Angels and Saints, the whole company of heaven, be ours as it was of our first Fathers of the New Covenant, and the whole truth which the primitive Church treasured as its heritage of life, be vindicated as our heritage also? But enough it is for us to know from what GOD has given us to dedicate to Him this day, that we may thank Him for a constant increase of blessings, and take courage for the future, and hope still even against hope, and do our own part in the revival of the work of GOD, manfully and trustfully, and not faint by the way, nor slack in zeal, but bear our witness in our own day in all patience, confessing CHRIST before men, and in CHRIST the whole Catholic truth as it lives in Him; and above all, seeking to live what we believe, and to set forth a good conversation, such as Heaven would own, remembering that the Day will come when the question will be, not so much who knew the LORD'S will, but who knew it and did it; when many even of the children of the kingdom will be cast out, and they only who "worship Him in spirit and in truth" shall be accepted. Only let us remember that GOD'S

"ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts ;"<sup>1</sup> that we must often learn to temper zeal by the law of meekness, and discipline ourselves in all prudence and charity, in humility and self-renunciation, if we would be instruments in His cause. The very power of the truth which we cherish should make us patient to endure in the midst of difficulties, and forbearing in the midst of oppression. We must remember that "faith worketh by love,"<sup>2</sup> and that the greatest of His gifts is "charity out of a pure heart."<sup>3</sup> There is a restraining of His power and a hiding of His wisdom, which especially characterize the mind of GOD, and we must ever remember what manner of spirit we are of, if we would fulfil His work and win His approval. In many things we must be content to wait, nor let our eagerness overrun the designs of GOD. It may be His will for us that we should suffer loss for our humiliation, as the punishment of our sins, or learn to trust Him more in determining the way and the means of accomplishing His purposes for us. It may be that He will work through others rather than ourselves, or that a greater boon lies hid in suffering patiently than in the desired success. But whatever the Will of GOD may be, it must ever be right for us to design generous sacrifices

<sup>1</sup> Isa. lv. 8.<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 6.<sup>3</sup> 1 Tim. i. 5.

in His service, to strive earnestly for the faith committed to our keeping, and to witness against an unbelieving world, and amidst a divided and distracted people, for what in our hearts we treasure as the only true manifestation of the life of CHRIST—the only groundwork of a real union with Him. To His unfailing guidance and mercies let us commit ourselves and the cause we have at heart, and pray for the near approach of that Day when “Wisdom” shall be “justified of all her children.”<sup>1</sup> Amen.

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke vii. 35.

## Recovery of the Fallen.<sup>1</sup>

*"And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."*—S. Matt. xi. 6.

WHETHER the inquiry—"Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"—came from S. John the Baptist on his own account, to satisfy questionings aroused in his own mind by the unexpected manner in which our LORD was manifesting Himself, so unlike his own course of action—or on account of his disciples, to satisfy their doubts, is a disputed question among expositors of Holy Scripture, though there can, I think, be no question but that it was on behalf of his disciples, not on his own behalf. Our LORD'S words concerning S. John, that he was not a man "shaken by the wind," would seem enough to show that his faith had not wavered. But this question affects not the lesson

<sup>1</sup> Preached at All Saints, Margaret Street, London, at the Anniversary of the Church Penitentiary Association, April 24, 1866.

which is to be drawn from our LORD'S reply, and it is to this that I would now turn your attention.

It is necessary, however, for me to place before you the circumstances under which the inquiry was made, and the issues depending on it ; for it was a momentous crisis in the progress of our LORD'S ministry. S. John Baptist had opened the way for our LORD'S Advent, by exhibiting a stern severity of morals. The effect of his preaching had been to separate off by a strong line of demarcation those who had been cleansed by his baptism, and those who still remained in their uncleanness. The feelings of the religious Jew were in favour of this broad distinction between the devout observer of the Law, and the sinner. Complete separateness from all contact with the unclean, was universally felt to be an essential characteristic of any one claiming a repute for sanctity.

Now, shortly before the incident we are considering, S. Matthew the publican had been called to be an Apostle. This led to our LORD'S coming into immediate contact with those whom the Pharisee had always classed among the worst outcasts. It was at the feast which S. Matthew gave immediately after his call, that our LORD for the first time appeared openly and publicly in their company. S. Matthew



describes the scene : "As JESUS sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples."<sup>1</sup> S. Mark adds a yet more important fact. He shows that this was not a mere temporary and incidental meeting, but that the intercourse then commenced between our LORD and these outcast ones, led on to a permanent intercourse. After describing the company at the feast in the same words which S. Matthew had employed, he adds : "For there were many, and they followed Him."<sup>2</sup> As these lost ones were drawn out of their sins to unite themselves with Him, they became a settled part of the gradually increasing band which now habitually ministered to Him, and became His disciples. After this, for the first time, we hear the Pharisees asking the malignant question : "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?"<sup>3</sup> But not only the captious and hostile Pharisees. The disciples of S. John the Baptist had also been present, and had asked the same question, though in a different spirit : "Then came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?"<sup>4</sup> They were startled and perplexed at the contrast which our

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. ix. 10.<sup>2</sup> S. Mark ii. 15.<sup>3</sup> S. Matt. ix. 11.<sup>4</sup> S. Matt. ix. 14.

LORD'S character and manner of conversation presented to the severe code of morals which they had received. This apparent laxity, as they esteemed it, and the notorious ill-repute of those who were now freely permitted to unite themselves on such familiar terms with our LORD, aroused the anxious question: "Is this the commencement of the Messianic kingdom? This gathering of the outcast, this accommodation to their lax habits,—can this be the opening scene of a true growth of the Kingdom which is to be the fulfilment of those glorious prophecies? Can this be the Hope of Israel,—this the King Who is to reign on Mount Sion, girt about, as He is, with such a company?" There evidently arose a dark cloud of disappointment and doubt over the face of the transcendently brilliant prospect which S. John had kindled in their hearts. They return back to their master in the prison, and report what they had seen. As S. Luke expresses it: "And the disciples of John showed him of all these things."<sup>1</sup>

Hence then arose the inquiry in reply to which the words of the text were uttered. The stumbling-block lay in the contrast. One Who was manifestly raising the standard of human life, Who was making efforts beyond all previous experience to develop the righte-

<sup>1</sup> S. Luke vii. 18.

ousness of the Law to its utmost possible spirituality, Who had been miraculously pointed out as the Messiah, on Whom the Spirit had visibly rested,—He has sunk into familiarities with the scorned and the excommunicate; He has placed Himself on a level with them; He is sharing their meal; He is accommodating Himself to their habits.

Our LORD'S answer, which was to overrule their doubts, and sustain the failing faith of these questioners, is a reference to facts. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."<sup>1</sup> The answer was a pressing home of the one great truth, that the Messiah's kingdom had entered the world as a reign of mercy; and therefore as a true realisation of the ancient prophecies, which spoke of the deliverance of man from the power of evil. It was not by exclusiveness, not by separating the few elect from the mass of society, not by drawing a strong line across the moral gulf which parted those who had kept, and those who had broken, the covenant, that the power of the Restorer of Israel was to be manifested; but by descending into the mass, in order to raise out of it the fallen, whom nevertheless

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xi. 5.

GOD had ordained to eternal life. He was to found His kingdom on individual souls, raised out of spiritual death to spiritual life, as a new creation of GOD.

The difficulty of reconciling the two extremes, an acknowledged sanctity associating itself with the off-scourings of society in order to bless with its miracles of restorative power, was the point on which, at that crisis, so much turned ; and the answer was simply an assurance that there would be a special blessing on those who could accept it. "Blessed is he, who-soever shall not be offended in Me."

And surely this is the law of all Divine operations in this fallen world. The Fall did not cause the withdrawal of the Divine Presence, but brought it more touchingly near in the actual endurance of the burden of the sins of the guilty race. In His natural Providence, GOD still "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."<sup>1</sup> Even among the heathen His Spirit strove, and strives still, against the extremest forms of sin, such as could provoke the Deluge. His love, making no respect of persons, has ever been going forth even to anticipate the movement of His creatures towards Him, so that if "we love Him," it

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. v. 45.

is "because He first loved us."<sup>1</sup> These are but instances of general laws directly opposed to any idea of separation from the sinner on the side of GOD, or of lines of demarcation drawn between Him and the fallen. Such laws and dispensations of love culminated in the gift of His only-begotten SON, to be even of one nature, one flesh with the fallen, to reconcile them to Himself in one Body.

And so, again, in regard to the Divine Presence within the soul. One of the chief difficulties to faith is a full belief of the indwelling Presence of GOD. The question arises, "Can GOD indeed dwell in such as I am?" That He should penetrate the substances of perfectly pure creatures, homogeneous, as it were, with Himself, and delight to abide in them, is conceivable. But to abide, to indwell, within the child of a sinful race, implies that He has associated Himself with my faults, that He comes in contact with my impurity, my lust, my passions, my thoughts and impulses of evil, so discordant with Himself, so abhorrent to His own nature. Is this possible? Yet the promise is clear, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their GOD, and they shall be My people."<sup>2</sup>

Still more strikingly strange does it seem, that the

<sup>1</sup> 1 S. John iv. 19.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 16.

Divine Presence should not desert even our sinful bodies. Though the body is the very seat of corruption, evil being specially propagated through the flesh and the motions of sin inworking there in its grossest forms, more repugnant, we should have thought, to the pure Spirit than even sins of the mind and spirit, yet the special wonder of the Incarnation is that it extended to the body, even that the indwelling Presence of GOD is specially, in Holy Scripture, predicated of the body, as tabernacling in the very flesh, even the corruptible body being declared to be the shrine of the Eternal, All-Holy SPIRIT, and to have become a very part, a member, of our LORD ; " Know ye not that your bodies are the members of CHRIST ?" " Know ye not that your body is the temple of the HOLY GHOST Which is in you ?"<sup>1</sup>

And even when our flesh dissolves and passes into corruption, yet still that Presence is in some mystery connected with the mouldering dust of the redeemed child of GOD. The very assurance we have of the " resurrection of the flesh" rests on this truth. Although we are unable to bear the decay of the last remains of the corrupting body, which we are forced to put from us, even when we would cling fondly to the relic of the loved one, but can do so no more, and must

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19.

hide it utterly out of sight—yet it is not so with GOD. He Who alone could touch the leper—He Whose feet might be kissed by the sinful breath of the woman from the city—He Who could eat and drink with publicans and sinners—and yet knew no corruption—His Spirit leaves not even the dissolved dust which has become the very food of the worm. He is the principle of life within the grain of wheat which has fallen into the ground and dies, out of which the “much fruit” of the risen body, fashioned after His glorious Body, will finally be brought forth.

This very self-same law, thus uniformly characterizing GOD in His relations with this fallen world which, through His SON and SPIRIT, He is restoring to life, distinguishes the Association whose anniversary we are to-day commemorating. I would not exaggerate, for this would ill serve the cause of truth ; nor would I desire to take an overcharged and prejudiced view of this work, though it has been one of the greatest blessings of my life to have had any share in it ; but I know of no institution amongst us which so strikingly represents this view of the operations of GOD—this characteristic aspect of our LORD’S life—more completely than does this Association. For its very vital principle is, that the pure, the con-

secrated, the virgin soul should devote itself to come into intimate contact with, and accommodate itself to, the worst forms of outcast life,—that in such fellowship, through the grace of CHRIST and the power of the SPIRIT, the fallen may arise, the impure may be purified. We surely see in the special work of the Association CHRIST again in His devoted members, eating and drinking with publicans and sinners,—His own love, and care, and self-sacrifice, His own grace of life, fulfilling the same eternal law of Divine beneficence towards the lost, drawing Him to them and them to Him. We see the same Form moving, ministering still, in the midst of the dark sin of our race. We see the lost drawn to Him as of old, through like ministrations of love in His servants. The same grace is perpetuated, through Himself, its Author, hidden beneath the veil of His creatures' work.

It is no wonder, therefore, that as our LORD'S conduct aroused the perplexed and anxious questionings of S. John's disciples, even so this Association should have been canvassed with a suspicious criticism. Those of us who have known the history of this Association from its commencement, have lived to see many objections, once raised against it, die out; and they may, therefore, with calm assurance listen



to fresh objections which still arise, confident that they too will equally pass away.

It was formerly urged that the object of the Association itself was unwise and to be rejected, on the ground that prevention, not cure, was the true Christian course, and that so much being done for the outcast was a disheartening to the more steadfast. It was answered that to remedy the effects of the fall is as needful as to preserve the unfallen ; that the costly Sacrifice of the Good Shepherd for the one sheep that was lost, is as much the law of Divine love as the care of the ninety and nine that went not astray ; and that the Prodigal Son was to be saved, whatever might be the feeling aroused within the heart of his elder brother.

Again, it was urged that all our care would be but labour lost, because the material on which we had to work was hopeless. It was urged, and the reply is surely unanswerable, that such an objection would paralyse all ministerial labour ; would stay the current of intercessory prayer ; would even make our LORD'S encouragement of the woman taken in adultery, His approval of the love of the woman from the city, and His whole dealings with S. Mary Magdalene, a delusion and a mockery ; nay, would even justify the charge brought in S. Paul's day against

the mode in which the Atonement was effected, that licence was thus given to sin, because we are no longer "under the law, but under grace," and making the hope sealed to the Penitent on the very Cross an error and a snare.

These objections are scarcely heard now. So neither are some of the objections once raised against the mode in which our objects are being carried out. We do not now hear of the objection once urged against the idea of Sisters. There was a time, which we can remember, when the very name could hardly be used without prejudice. But what theory could not do, nor long-established Church use, nor even scriptural authority,—for all these arguments were often vainly used to show the truth and reasonableness of such self-devotion,—what such modes of proof failed to accomplish,—Sisters of Mercy have themselves gained by their own deeds. The world's resistance has been broken down, may it not be said? its actual approval gained, by a testimony to which our LORD was not ashamed to appeal in His own defence, "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works." "The works that I do in My FATHER'S Name, they bear witness of Me."<sup>1</sup>

Again it was urged, that, granted that Sisters might be employed in other works, yet not in this; that the

<sup>1</sup> S. John x. 38, 25.

pure could not come near the impure without taint ; that the attempt to save would be fatal to those who made the sacrifice,—as if the fallen woman does not seek to hide her shame, specially from her own sex, and still reverence the gift and power of purity in others ; or that true purity is not its own safeguard ; or that GOD cannot, by His supernatural grace, shed a veil of light around His own who trust in Him ; or that He would fail to sustain those whom He has thus stirred to minister to Him by signs which mark a true vocation.

Other questions have crossed the path of the Association, some which by their mutual contradiction may be left to confute one another. Thus in earlier days it was urged against the works of our Houses of Mercy, that the principle of love was carried too far ; that the sterner discipline of former times—the more penal view of the Penitentiary, which treated sin as crime—was, because more deterring, therefore more effectual to check its progress, and remedy its consequences.

But now, according to some publications, which at the present time are actively disseminated, the very reverse is said to be the case ; and Houses of Mercy are condemned as too austere, unnaturally cruel, and a severity of punishment, not surpassed by a jail, said to be employed.

Such contradictory objections may well be left to contend with each other. A fairer judgment would estimate the character of a work by the mind and disposition of the workers, and would trust, as truer than all criticism, the conviction that if the love of CHRIST be the alone motive for devotion to a work, it must needs be kind ; and that if it be love formed after the Church's mind, it must needs be regulated by the law of discipline.

If, finally, some words of exhortation more widely applicable to the members of the Association may be added, it should be borne in mind that an Association claiming to assume the title of the Church, cannot be limited to the Houses of Mercy in which its work is specially being applied.

To raise the standard of devotion for the recovery of the fallen, is to deepen in all hearts the consciousness of the inestimable grace of personal purity ; to suggest to every one the need of watchfulness ; to stimulate in us all the action of prayer, self-denial, mortification ; to resist with steadfast earnestness the first springs of softness or laxity ; to make the conscience more tenderly alive than ever at the first approach of an impure thought ; to make contrition more intense, more sensitively tender, if sin has been

committed. It might well be hoped that, through the private, personal example and influence of the Associates, the effect of our work should be felt to be spreading even in the secret recesses of society, where luxury and idleness, and a too easy freedom of manners, have opened the way, it is to be feared, in too many cases, to a dissoluteness, a voluptuousness, which, if the refinement were stripped off, and its real character seen under the repulsive forms of the coarse vice of the harlotry of the streets and alleys of the city, would revolt with its accursed breath of degradation and shame some whom it now enthrals to utter ruin. There are secret indulgences pervading, it is to be feared, the highest forms of polished society, such as we have been wont, in our self-complacency, to associate with the habits of foreign lands, which rival in their real malignity the more daring shamelessness of the open courtesan. Might not the Associates of an Institution like this find means to penetrate even such secret corruption, by the silent witness of a high tone of chaste devotion, by the ceaseless diffusion of high principles of moral truth and uprightness, and the assertion of the greatness of the call to penitence for even the least departure from chastity; and thus help to leaven society, even as they labour to raise the funds needful for

the maintenance of the special Houses of our care? Individual Associates dwelling in the midst of the world seem pledged, by their bond of fellowship with this work, to do all that lies in them to further this great end, by raising our social and domestic tone, more especially where wealth and ease make the inroad of impurity so fatal, because of the greater height from which its victims fall; and so subtle, because veiled under such seductively attractive forms. Might they not thus become in society what our Sisters of Mercy are in our Religious Homes?

For the strengthening of such love and self-devotion, for ever rekindling fresh ardent efforts against sin as felt in ourselves or others, we need, above all, confidence in the power of Him Who came "to seek and to save" us at all cost of suffering to Himself. Any doubt or despondency lurking in our minds must paralyse all our efforts, and cloud the vision of our LORD. We need faith in His ever-present aid, His unceasing manifestations of power, in upholding those who trust to Him. We need, moreover, confidence in the renewed nature of which we are made partakers through His grace. We need to live in this two-fold consciousness of His Presence in us, and our abiding in Him, that the going forth

of His power may be our unfailing stay. We need patience to labour on, even though we find not all the sympathy and the support which we may have looked for. We must, moreover, learn to bear our measure of the reproach which from the beginning has followed His work. We must be content to labour as He laboured, to be in the world as He was in the world,—in the midst it may be of doubts and questionings,—yet assured that if we can trace His likeness in our efforts of service, He will own us at the last day, and receive us with the welcome sound, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy LORD.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. Matt. xxv. 21.

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